

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY

Report of an Audit of
Charles Sturt University

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CONTENTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
1.1 Audit Findings	1
1.1.1 Main Points.....	1
1.1.2 Matters from Cycle 1 Audit	2
1.1.3 Theme 1: Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning	2
1.1.4 Theme 2: Internationalisation	3
1.1.5 National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes	4
1.1.6 Other External Reference Points	4
1.2 Institutional Context	5
1.3 Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations.....	5
Commendations.....	6
Affirmations	7
Recommendations	7
2 MATTERS FROM CYCLE 1 AUDIT	9
2.1 Recommendations 11 and 13: Follow-up	9
2.2 Recommendation 20: Follow-up.....	11
2.3 Affirmation 4: Follow-up	12
2.4 Recommendation 21: Follow-up.....	13
2.5 Improvements to Internal Quality Assurance	13
2.5.1 Risk Management.....	13
2.5.2 Governance	14
3 THEME: PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING.....	17
3.1 Strategic Objectives and Current Provision of Professional Education	17
3.1.1 Strategic Directions	17
3.1.2 Professional Education Courses at CSU	18
3.2 Graduate and Student Outcomes	19
3.2.1 Graduate Outcomes	19
3.2.2 Student Retention and Grades	20
3.2.3 Student Satisfaction with Learning and Student Engagement.....	21
3.2.4 Employer Engagement	21
3.3 Academic Standards for Professional Education	22
3.3.1 Professional Accreditation and Benchmarking	22
3.3.2 CSU Degree Initiative.....	22
3.3.3 Graduate Attributes.....	24
3.3.4 Partnerships in Professional Education	25
3.3.5 Course and Subject Approval and Review	25
3.3.6 Credit Transfer and Advanced Standing	26
3.3.7 Support for Indigenous Peoples	27
3.3.8 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism	27
3.4 Practice-Based and Fieldwork Education.....	27
3.4.1 Review and Improvement of Fieldwork Education	28

3.4.2	Management of Fieldwork Education	28
3.4.3	Academic Policies for Fieldwork Education	29
3.4.4	Fieldwork Education Standards	30
3.5	Support for Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning	31
3.5.1	EFPI and RIPPLE	31
3.5.2	Fieldwork Education Network	31
3.5.3	Staff Development for Flexible Learning, including Professional and Fieldwork Education	32
3.5.4	Other Student Support for Fieldwork Education	33
4	THEME: INTERNATIONALISATION	35
4.1	Strategy and Responsibilities	35
4.1.1	Strategic Directions	35
4.1.2	Responsibilities for Internationalisation	36
4.2	Self-Review of Internationalisation	37
4.3	Offshore Teaching Partnerships and CSU's Offshore Campus	38
4.3.1	Changchun Taxation College in China	38
4.3.2	HELP University College in Malaysia	39
4.3.3	CSU Ontario	40
4.4	CSU Study Centres in Australia	41
4.5	Administrative and Academic Aspects of Quality Assurance for Teaching Partnerships	43
4.5.1	Administrative Aspects of Quality Assurance for Teaching Partnerships	43
4.5.2	Academic Aspects of Quality Assurance for Teaching Partnerships	43
4.6	International Students on CSU Campuses and Externally	45
4.6.1	International Student Experience at CSU Campuses	45
4.6.2	International Research Students on Campus	45
4.6.3	International Distance Education Students	46
4.7	Internationalisation of the Curriculum	47
4.8	Student Mobility	47
4.9	International Research Collaborations and Staff Mobility	48
5	DATA	49
	APPENDICES	55
	APPENDIX A: THE AUDIT PROCESS	55
	APPENDIX B: AUQA'S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VISION AND VALUES	57
	APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL	59
	APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS	60

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *Audit Findings*

The scope for the 2009 audit of Charles Sturt University (CSU or the University) is the two themes of 'Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning' and 'Internationalisation', together with the follow-up of selected recommendations from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report. In addition this Report includes comments on the University's compliance with the MCEETYA *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*, other external reference points and academic standards.

AUQA's findings are contained in sections 2 to 4. A selection of data that support the findings is provided in section 5. Information on the conduct of the audit is contained in Appendix A.

1.1.1 Main Points

CSU continues to focus on meeting the educational and research needs of regional and rural communities within New South Wales (NSW) and more broadly, while also offering professional courses very widely through flexible delivery and teaching partnerships. AUQA commends CSU for its implementation of a 'One University' vision across its various communities and for its continued strong engagement with those communities. The University acknowledges the very diverse student populations it serves, and the need to improve retention and progress among some specific student cohorts.

Seeking to maintain a leadership role among Australian universities in flexible learning and professional education, CSU is vigorously implementing a range of academic initiatives to better position itself. These initiatives include a curriculum renewal project and the establishment of institutes to develop and research aspects of professional practice and fieldwork education, including the creation of standards for fieldwork education that, when further developed, will provide useful guidance to the Australian higher education sector. AUQA commends CSU for its successful educational collaboration with the New South Wales Police Force, as an example of good practice in professional education.

AUQA finds that CSU needs to give greater attention to the competitive risks it faces in flexible and online delivery, and to improving the consistency and quality of the academic experience for all students. Given the number of initiatives under way, the University needs to develop explicit change management strategies to ensure that all its academic staff are able to improve their ability to develop curricula and to teach in ways that are appropriate for CSU's aims. On this point, CSU is commended for recognising the strategic role of human resources in achieving its vision.

A broad understanding of internationalisation in all its aspects is still developing at CSU. The University however has made significant steps to meet ambitious domestic student mobility targets, while the operation of a campus in Ontario, Canada, is increasing the international perspective of academics.

The conduct of several critical self-reviews in the period leading up to the audit has demonstrated the University's capacity to identify improvements to its own operations. AUQA

makes some recommendations and affirmations to increase the oversight of academic quality assurance arrangements by CSU's Academic Senate.

The University's 2008 self-review of internationalisation revealed a lack of thorough and systematic quality assurance in the period since 2004 for many elements of internationalisation, including offshore and onshore partnerships. Although the University has begun to address many of these matters, AUQA makes several recommendations and affirmations for further improvements to academic quality assurance processes in respect of partnerships, which should become standard practice at CSU.

1.1.2 Matters from Cycle 1 Audit

The Audit Panel reviewed the recommendations from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report and investigated a selection of these. This Report includes affirmations and recommendations that relate to other topics that were raised in the 2004 audit.

Two recommendations relating to leadership in online learning and teaching were followed-up, as CSU aims to be a leader in online learning. Since the 2004 audit, CSU has clarified responsibilities for online learning and flexible delivery, established a new Division of Learning and Teaching Services, and successfully implemented CSU Interact, its online learning platform. The University is commended for the establishment of a Flexible Learning Institute. However, CSU needs to do more to increase academic staff knowledge of and take-up of online learning capabilities and needs more systematically to plan for this to occur.

A recommendation on the Student and University Charter has been addressed but AUQA suggests CSU needs to consider the adequacy of the information it provides to prospective and current students, particularly for external students and those who have to plan for a fieldwork education component of their studies.

The 2004 AUQA Audit Report contained an affirmation in respect of the University's performance on student attrition. Since then, attrition rates have increased rather than decreased. CSU acknowledges that retention is an issue and has made commitments to better support students in their first year through a Student Experience Program. These developments are affirmed.

The University is commended for its thorough implementation of a 360 degree feedback process for senior academics and managers, and for the strategic focus it gives to human resources issues, following from a recommendation in the 2004 AUQA Audit Report.

On other matters relating to internal quality assurance, CSU is asked to give more attention to the strategic risks of its goals of leadership in flexible learning, given the presence of many other competitors, and to business continuity risks, particularly for IT infrastructure.

AUQA affirms Academic Senate's self-review and the improvements identified through this process but recommends that Academic Senate more actively monitor the quality of academic processes and policy implementation outcomes across the whole University.

1.1.3 Theme 1: Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning

On professional education, CSU is commended for its emphasis on the provision of professional education courses to support, in particular, regional communities. The University is also commended for operating as 'One University' across multiple campuses in regional New South

Wales and for the consolidation of disciplines across those campuses. The University's engagement with regional employers and the satisfaction of these employers with CSU graduates is commended.

The University's performance on graduate satisfaction as assessed by the Course Experience Questionnaire is below sector means on several measures, although CSU has performed comparatively well on the Graduate Pathways Survey. On retention, AUQA recommends that CSU strengthen its reporting of data on retention, progress and success by cohort, to ensure that these data are routinely visible to relevant committees and academic managers.

AUQA affirms the establishment by the University of the CSU Degree Initiative as a major curriculum renewal process, while recommending that CSU clarify its definition and approach to graduate attributes. Given the range of activities under way at CSU to improve learning and teaching, AUQA suggests CSU adopt explicit change management strategies to ensure these activities are brought to fruition.

The University is commended for its collaborative partnership for professional education with the NSW Police Force and for its use and further development of an in-house electronic repository for course content and approvals. The University's engagement with Indigenous communities, and support for Indigenous students, is also commended.

CSU is commended for developing a publicly-available credit transfer database but AUQA recommends that Academic Senate keep under active review the credit granted at faculty level.

It is evident that the University has given much attention to improving fieldwork education and CSU is commended for the systematic and comprehensive approach it is taking. Improvements to the overall management of fieldwork education, and to electronic systems for practicum management, are affirmed by AUQA. CSU is commended for its development of a set of Fieldwork Education Standards and for its engagement with professional practice through initiatives such as dedicated institutes and the Fieldwork Education Network. While CSU is commended for the support it has provided to assist students to undertake placements in professional education, AUQA recommends that CSU explore additional means to ensure students have good academic experiences, as there is considerable variability in these experiences.

1.1.4 Theme 2: Internationalisation

CSU has an Internationalisation Strategy but acknowledges that staff across the University do not yet have the multidimensional understanding of internationalisation that this strategy aims for. This finding was reflected in a 2008 critical self-review of internationalisation undertaken by the University.

The self-review revealed a number of recommendations from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report that had not been addressed, particularly in regard to the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of offshore and onshore partners. While some strategic action has been taken by CSU, including the rationalisation of offshore teaching partnerships, not all operational aspects of quality assurance were attended to.

AUQA finds that the University has acted quickly to implement many of the improvements suggested by the self-review, but is concerned by the lack of attention by CSU in the period since 2004 to maintaining quality assurance arrangements to safeguard the integrity of its academic programs. AUQA recommends that the University ensure it has fully implemented the

recommendations from its self-review. At the same time, AUQA notes the successful establishment of the CSU Ontario Campus.

CSU has some strong partnerships for the teaching of international students. AUQA identifies a range of issues regarding offshore and onshore teaching partnerships that CSU is beginning to attend to, including the conduct of regular reviews of the operations of these partnerships. Administrative arrangements for teaching partnerships have been placed on a firmer foundation and CSU is commended for the action it is taking to seek feedback from students on the performance of education agents.

AUQA finds that academic quality assurance arrangements within the Faculty of Business need improving, particularly in respect of transparent and objective internal processes and stronger external input into reviews. AUQA recommends that CSU develop a policy on dual awards, i.e. awards offered with other institutions and affirms the auditing by CSU of admissions and credit granted through partnerships.

AUQA commends CSU for its commitment to meeting targets for domestic student international mobility in ways that are integrated in academic subjects. However, the University needs to do more to ensure support and a sense of intellectual community for all research students, including international students.

1.1.5 National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes

The *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* (the National Protocols) require all universities to meet a range of criteria, in particular nationally prescribed criteria A1 to A10 and D1 to D5. The University provided a current self-assessment against the Protocols as one of the Supporting Materials for the audit.

On the evidence considered by the Panel, Charles Sturt University satisfies the criteria in the National Protocols. Specific comment on the University's compliance with one element of the National Protocols is contained in section 4.2.

1.1.6 Other External Reference Points

The University has referred in its Portfolio documentation to a number of external reference points that are used to ensure the compliance and quality of its provision, including:

- Australian Qualifications Framework
- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2001, *Policy Guidelines on Cross-Sector Qualification Linkages*
- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2005, *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Australian Universities*
- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2005, *Universities and their Students: Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities*
- DEST 2007, National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (the National Code 2007)
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cwlth) (ESOS Act) and including the National Code 2007 (see above)
- *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cwlth) and associated guidelines
- MCEETYA 2000, *Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education*

- UNESCO/OECD 2005, *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education*.

The audit did not identify any matters of concern regarding the University's compliance with these external reference points.

1.2 Institutional Context

Charles Sturt University became an Australian university in 1989 and thus is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2009. Its main campuses are at Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange and Wagga Wagga, with specialist campuses in Canberra, Parramatta, Manly and Goulburn and an offshore campus in Ontario, Canada. The University also has study centres in Sydney and Melbourne and a range of offshore teaching partnerships.

The University's academic activities are managed as four faculties: Arts; Business; Education; and Science. Within these faculties, there is a total of 27 academic schools. The University is a member of six Cooperative Research Centres as well as nine research centres.

CSU draws its student population from a wide geographic area and a majority of its students study externally, as shown below. The University is an active supporter of the concept of a 'university for inland Australia' and has shown its willingness to enter into discussions with other universities about the feasibility of one wider networked university across regional areas.

Student Enrolment (Headcounts and EFTSL) 2008

	Distance Education	On Campus (incl. Goulburn)	Partner-based		Total
			Onshore (study centres)	Offshore	
Domestic Headcount EFTSL	18,328 6490	9672 8641	79 32		28,079 15,163
International Headcount EFTSL	1211 333	682 462	1258 872	1456 913	4607 2580
Total Headcount EFTSL	19,539 6823	10,354 9104	1337 904	1456 913	32,686 17,744
In Percentage Headcount EFTSL	60% 39%	32% 51%	4% 5%	4% 5%	100% 100%

Source: Supplied by CSU upon request. Headcount is for sole/major course only. On campus includes mixed mode students.

1.3 Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations

This Report contains commendations, affirmations and recommendations. A commendation refers to the achievement of a stated goal, or to some plan or activity that has led to, or appears likely to lead to, the achievement of a stated goal, and which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. A recommendation refers to an area in need of attention, whether in respect of approach, deployment or results, which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. Where such matters have already been identified by the University, with evidence, they are termed

‘affirmations’. High priority recommendations are marked as ‘urgent’. It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Audit Report may have resource implications.

The themes for Cycle 2 audits are chosen for their risk potential and are likely also to reflect the institution’s own assessment of its developmental and strategic needs. As for Cycle 1 audits, AUQA aims to assist the University to enhance the quality and standards of its operations.

Commendations

1. AUQA commends CSU for the establishment of the Flexible Learning Institute and related actions to develop flexible learning capabilities among academics.10
2. AUQA commends CSU for its recognition of the strategic importance of the human resources function and its thorough implementation of a 360 degree feedback process for senior executives and academic managers.....13
3. AUQA commends CSU for its continuing emphasis on the provision of professional education courses, including the use of flexible delivery, to support regional communities.19
4. AUQA commends CSU for its success in operating as ‘One University’ across its multiple campuses in New South Wales and for the consolidation of disciplines across its campuses to support its focus on professional education.19
5. AUQA commends CSU for its engagement with regional employers and for the levels of satisfaction with CSU graduates expressed by these employers.....22
6. AUQA commends CSU, with the New South Wales Police Force, for their management and operation of a successful partnership in police education.25
7. AUQA commends CSU for its development and use of a single electronic repository for course and subject content and approvals and for the development of a Mandatory Subject Information System to support the use of consistent information across the University.26
8. AUQA commends CSU for having implemented a publicly-available credit transfer precedent database.27
9. AUQA commends CSU for its engagement with a wide range of Indigenous communities and for its support for Indigenous students.27
10. AUQA commends CSU for taking a systematic and comprehensive approach to quality assurance and improvement for fieldwork education.....28
11. AUQA commends CSU for the development of Fieldwork Education Standards and self-assessment tools, and encourages the University to continue its program of self-assessment against the standards, in order to identify improvements and areas for development.30
12. AUQA commends CSU for its serious engagement with professional practice and fieldwork education through a range of initiatives, including the establishment of institutes to advance professional practice and the Fieldwork Education Network.31
13. AUQA commends CSU for providing funding to support students on placement, noting that the University is seeking to expand this support.33

14. AUQA commends CSU for the actions it is implementing to seek feedback from students on the performance of education agents and suggests these arrangements be extended to its Study Centres.43
15. AUQA commends CSU for its commitment to meeting an ambitious target for student mobility and for the opportunities it provides for students to gain international academic experiences.48

Affirmations

1. AUQA affirms CSU's focus on student retention and the first year experience, while encouraging CSU to take additional steps to identify and address the causes of student attrition.12
2. AUQA affirms the findings of CSU's Academic Senate Self-Review, including the development of a University-wide moderation standard.15
3. AUQA affirms the establishment by CSU of the CSU Degree Initiative as a potentially systematic approach to curriculum renewal and implementation of its flexible learning agenda.....23
4. AUQA affirms the actions being taken by CSU to ensure better oversight and management of fieldwork education including improved practicum management and information management in fieldwork education.....29
5. AUQA affirms the planned auditing by CSU of admissions and the granting of credit at its Study Centre in Sydney, and encourages CSU to conduct such audits regularly for all teaching partnerships.42

Recommendations

1. AUQA recommends that CSU adopt more systematic approaches to the development of flexible learning at course level and to ensuring staff are aware of the changes that will be needed to fully embrace flexible learning.11
2. AUQA recommends that CSU provide prospective students, including students in professional education courses, with more comprehensive information on the University's academic, time and financial expectations of students in each course.11
3. AUQA recommends that CSU develop more comprehensive and systematic approaches to addressing the strategic risks inherent in its goal of leadership in the quality delivery of flexible learning.....14
4. AUQA recommends that CSU ensure that Academic Senate is better able to actively monitor the quality of academic processes and outcomes across the whole University.16
5. AUQA recommends that CSU improve its data reporting to ensure that the retention, progress and grade point averages of students from differing cohorts are routinely considered by Senate and academic managers across the University.21

6.	AUQA recommends that CSU adopt explicit change management strategies to ensure the effective and coordinated implementation of a range of initiatives in curriculum renewal, flexible learning and fieldwork education.....	23
7.	AUQA recommends that CSU clarify for students and staff its definition of CSU graduate attributes, the desired learning outcomes for students across all undergraduate courses and the University's approach to the embedding of these graduate attributes in curriculum design and assessment.....	24
8.	AUQA recommends that CSU's Academic Senate keep under active review the credit granted within faculties.	27
9.	AUQA recommends that CSU make stronger efforts to ensure academics and others involved in fieldwork education have an understanding of pedagogical approaches to practice-based education and the desired learning outcomes.	32
10.	AUQA recommends that CSU explore additional means to ensure a consistently high quality of academic experience for students, especially for students studying externally.....	33
11.	(urgent) AUQA recommends that CSU ensure that it has thoroughly addressed and implemented the recommendations in its 2008 self-review of internationalisation, particularly those relating to academic quality assurance.	38
12.	AUQA recommends that CSU review the responsibilities within the Faculty of Business for academic quality assurance of offshore teaching partnerships to ensure the use of objective and evidence-based processes.	44
13.	AUQA recommends that CSU use an independent review process, involving academics outside the Faculty of Business or external to the University, to review the effectiveness of academic quality assurance for the Faculty's offshore and onshore teaching partnerships.	44
14.	AUQA recommends that CSU develop a policy on dual awards and that pathways for students to obtain dual awards should be noted in agreements with teaching partners and approved by Academic Senate.....	44
15.	AUQA recommends CSU undertake further planning to ensure it is able to provide support and a sense of intellectual community for all international and domestic higher degree by research students.....	46

2 MATTERS FROM CYCLE 1 AUDIT

Recognising the importance of quality enhancement and improvement, the audit considers whether the recommendations and affirmations in the Cycle 1 AUQA audit report have been implemented. A sample of recommendations and affirmations is selected and checked. As well, AUQA seeks evidence of the increasing effectiveness of the institution's quality assurance and improvement system/framework.

In its Performance Portfolio, the University provided an updated report on progress in implementing the 10 affirmations and 21 recommendations from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report. Matters relevant to many of these recommendations are addressed in sections 3 and 4 of this Report. The Audit Panel selected some other affirmations and recommendations for follow-up, as described below.

2.1 **Recommendations 11 and 13: Follow-up**

Recommendation 11 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report is: *That in progressing towards its goal of developing a 'leading edge learning environment', CSU clarify how effective leadership of its online learning and teaching initiatives will be secured. This will need to take place in conjunction with the recommended reconsideration of the future role and function of the Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching.*

Recommendation 13 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report is: *That CSU, utilising external expertise as necessary, reconsider the future role and function of the Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching with regard to leadership of pedagogical development, especially in the online environment, in order to meet the University's goal of developing a leading edge learning environment.*

CSU's aim of being a leader in online learning is reflected in the University Strategy 2007–2011. One of four key objectives is that CSU should: 'Continue to lead in the quality provision of flexible delivery of learning and teaching which:

- Is supported by well-researched curriculum and teaching methodologies
- Uses research and technology to be flexible and responsive to student needs and feedback
- Provides shared learning spaces and teaching experiences for students on and off campus, and
- Builds communities of learning especially amongst dispersed students'.

CSU has undertaken a range of activities to address this recommendation. The University advises that leadership of the online learning and teaching initiatives of CSU is the responsibility of the Learning and Teaching Committee of Academic Senate (LTC). This Committee is supported by the Information and Learning Systems Committee and both committees are chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

The Learning Materials Centre and the Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching have been disestablished and replaced by a new, single Division of Learning and Teaching Services (DLTS), which has overall responsibility for managing learning and teaching services. Educational designers in each faculty support DLTS in facilitating academic staff development. The Division of Library Services was also restructured to better support flexible learning.

In early 2008, CSU successfully implemented its new online learning platform, CSU Interact, which uses the Sakai collaboration and learning environment. CSU is an active participant in the worldwide Sakai community. This initiative means that all CSU subjects have a CSU Interact site. The University has a requirement that, for all subjects, teaching staff must use the online Forum site and respond to Forum messages at least within a week of posting.

To emphasise leadership in online learning, the Flexible Learning Institute (FLI) was established in October 2007, under the portfolio of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The FLI aims to promote and foster excellence in flexible learning, through pedagogical scholarship, promotion of good practice, policy advice and leadership initiatives. As part of its strategy to engage individual academics, FLI provides teaching fellowships and seed grants in priority areas.

The FLI is also developing standards for flexible learning at CSU, which are expected to expand and clarify the requirements for online interaction by academic staff, a development that the Audit Panel endorses. A draft concept paper has been prepared.

CSU states that development in online learning and its implications for flexible and blended learning are the major priorities for CSU's academic staff development in learning and teaching. AUQA finds that these two recommendations from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report have been addressed by CSU.

Commendation 1

AUQA commends CSU for the establishment of the Flexible Learning Institute and related actions to develop flexible learning capabilities among academics.

It is clear that much remains to be done before CSU can be confident that all its teaching is adequately directed towards the provision of quality flexible learning. Although the Audit Panel found numerous enthusiastic supporters and users of online learning at CSU, there is a great deal of variability in the use of online technologies by academics, even in regard to use of the online Forum. The Panel notes that many students would appreciate more use of podcasts or videos of lectures, especially external students.

The University's claim of leadership in flexible education currently rests to a significant extent on the University being the largest provider of distance education among Australian universities, and the first to implement an enterprise-wide open source learning environment. However, the use by CSU academics of online capabilities is highly variable and it is not evident that CSU is leading in this regard. A small number of subjects is provided wholly online. CSU believes that many students value supplementation of online delivery with other formats and continues to provide subject material for distance education students in print or on CD-ROM.

In order to consolidate its position in flexible learning, AUQA encourages CSU to use more systematic approaches to developing flexible learning, with a continuing focus of activity on courses rather than on individual subjects.

In addition, CSU needs to do more to ensure that all staff appreciate that established approaches to traditional distance education may not apply equally well in a flexible learning environment. As an example, the Audit Panel observes that there are differing views among academics on whether internal and distance education students should have access to the same material. On the one hand, there is a concern that if internal students have access to the full subject notes available to external students, they may stop coming to lectures or feel overloaded. An alternate view is that in a flexible learning environment, students should be able

to choose from a range of information sources. Further comments on this issue are provided in section 3.5.3.

The Audit Panel notes that there needs to be clarity for staff around the intent and operational consequences, including workloads and time allocation, of realising CSU's vision of leadership in flexible learning. The CSU Degree Initiative (section 3.3.2) and the draft paper on flexible learning standards provide ways to commence this process but it will be necessary to ensure that conversations about flexible learning are accessible to a range of internal and external stakeholders.

In the view of the Audit Panel, Academic Senate and Senate committees should also consider ways in which their members can become more familiar with developments in flexible learning, so these committees can take a more active leadership role, not least in ensuring that policies reflect flexible learning principles. A more detailed Online Learning Environment Plan may also assist the University.

Recommendation 1

AUQA recommends that CSU adopt more systematic approaches to the development of flexible learning at course level and to ensuring staff are aware of the changes that will be needed to fully embrace flexible learning.

2.2 Recommendation 20: Follow-up

Recommendation 20 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report is: *That CSU reconsider the role and content of 'The Student and University Charter Expectations and Responsibilities' to ensure that the undertakings it makes are realistic and achievable for its diverse student groups.*

AUQA finds the University has addressed part of this recommendation by issuing, in December 2008, a revised CSU Student Charter, as a summary document to help students understand what it means to be a student member of the CSU community. Other initiatives to assist students in understanding expectations in a university environment are being pursued as part of the Student Experience Program (section 2.3).

CSU now needs to consider the adequacy of the information it provides to prospective students, particularly for students who are studying externally or who are required to undertake fieldwork education as part of their course. In the view of the Audit Panel, many students would not only appreciate more information on the content and requirements of the subjects they choose to enrol in, but would like more comprehensive 'road maps' for their course. External students, in particular, need to be able to plan their commitments, including planning for travel and expenses for fieldwork and residential schools. To do so, they should be provided with information about initial expectations of them, eg for laptops and appropriate clothing on some courses, options for fieldwork, and any additional costs they may incur. The provision of this additional information will assist CSU to realise its vision of providing distinctive education programs for the professions.

Recommendation 2

AUQA recommends that CSU provide prospective students, including students in professional education courses, with more comprehensive information on the University's academic, time and financial expectations of students in each course.

2.3 **Affirmation 4: Follow-up**

Affirmation 4 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report is: *AUQA affirms CSU's finding that considerable attention is required to lessen rates of student attrition, particularly for undergraduate students from first to second year.*

On the latest available comparative data, the University's progress rate for commencing domestic students has been declining since 2005, while its attrition rate for these students has continued to deteriorate since 2003 (data items 5.1 and 5.2). Progress rates for commencing overseas students also show a declining trend between 2005 and 2007. Attrition rates for international students were higher for 2006 than for 2004, although better than the average for CSU's comparator cohort.

The University's performance on these measures is worse than the sector averages and the average for CSU's cohort comparator institutions, which are Deakin University, James Cook University, Swinburne University, the University of New England, the University of Tasmania and the University of Wollongong. The University's Institution Assessment Framework (IAF) Portfolio notes that the measures used do not account for CSU's relatively large distance education cohort, and the Audit Panel notes that not all institutions in CSU's comparator cohort have significant proportions of distance education students. CSU's performance appears closer to the average for comparator cohort institutions with large proportions of distance education students.

Since the 2004 AUQA Audit Report, CSU has not reduced its rates of student attrition. Accordingly, the Audit Panel finds that CSU has not effectively addressed this issue. This is not to suggest that CSU has not undertaken some important actions, including the successful STUDYLINK program and administrative changes, to improve the experience of all students. In 2008, the University commenced a Student Experience Program to better coordinate and provide services to students, building on a Work Process Improvement process running from 2005. The program aims to ensure better engagement between the University and students regardless of who they are, where they are, or what stage they are in the student lifecycle. Elements of the Student Experience Program include integrated support through a Student Service Centre and the consolidation of student feedback and processing of queries. The Student Experience Program thus is giving a renewed focus to the improvement of retention at CSU. A second major project under the Student Experience Program is the Transitions Project, commencing in 2009, which aims to strengthen preparatory studies and support for students in their first year of study and preparation for potential students.

AUQA acknowledges CSU's commitment to do more to support students in their first year of study. The Audit Panel recognises that attrition is a complex phenomenon, especially for institutions with numbers of external students who have chosen to study in this mode because of the flexibility it provides. The comments in this Audit Report, particularly those that relate to the need for consistency in the student learning experience, may assist CSU to better address academic factors affecting student attrition.

Affirmation 1

AUQA affirms CSU's focus on student retention and the first year experience, while encouraging CSU to take additional steps to identify and address the causes of student attrition.

2.4 **Recommendation 21: Follow-up**

Recommendation 21 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report is: *That CSU give consideration to including a 360 degree feedback process for Deans, Directors and senior executive, as part of the leadership development and performance management activities of these staff.*

At the time of the 2004 AUQA audit, many heads of school had undertaken a 360 degree feedback exercise as part of the University's Leadership Development Program. The recommendation was to extend this process. A formal 360 degree feedback process started with the Vice-Chancellor and in 2007 the process was extended to deans, executive directors and members of the Vice-Chancellor's Forum. CSU has resourced the process well enough to provide external coaching and professional development for these senior staff. In 2009, CSU reaffirmed its commitment to executive coaching and 360 degree feedback and now is offering these to heads of schools, research centre directors and divisional directors. CSU also plans to implement a Leadership through Coaching initiative in 2009. These actions are designed to assist organisation development across the University.

It is evident that CSU has embraced this recommendation and that staff are finding the process to be of value. The Audit Panel observes that the University is well positioned to take a strategic approach to human resource development, noting the presence of the executive director of human resources on the senior executive team.

Commendation 2

AUQA commends CSU for its recognition of the strategic importance of the human resources function and its thorough implementation of a 360 degree feedback process for senior executives and academic managers.

2.5 **Improvements to Internal Quality Assurance**

In its Performance Portfolio, the University provided a list of the major continuous improvement activities initiated by senior management, sections and Academic Senate since the Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Report.

This list demonstrates the capacity of the University to identify areas for improvement and act on them. Although this Report contains findings in regard to some areas for improvement not identified by the University, these findings should be taken in the context of a significant effort by CSU to improve many areas of operation over the past five years, consistent with objectives in the University Strategy.

The Audit Panel identified two specific areas, discussed below, where CSU needs to undertake further action to improve its internal quality assurance.

2.5.1 Risk Management

The University has taken many steps to thoroughly implement an affirmation in the 2004 AUQA Audit Report concerning a more formal approach to the identification, assessment and management of corporate and operational risk. Under the auspices of the Audit and Risk Committee of Council, the University has over the past few years:

- maintained a corporate level risk assessment which is reviewed by University Council and included in summary form in the University's annual reports
- implemented risk management processes at faculty and division level, including risk registers aligned with operational plans, and now at school level

- embedded risk management training and requirements in human resource policies and processes
- implemented a management checklist of accountabilities
- prepared an online 'Fraud and Corruption Prevention' educational package for implementation in 2009
- required CSU's Internal Auditor to annually review a sample of risks identified in risk registers
- updated, in 2009, the CSU Risk Management Policy.

Notwithstanding this sustained attention to risk management, the Audit Panel considers there are some strategic risks that require more systematic senior level consideration and greater recognition in the University risk register. The first of these is the risk of competition from the increasing availability of flexible study options from other institutions. It is becoming increasingly easy for many universities to offer courses online. As this means of provision expands, CSU's reputation for providing good distance education by traditional print-based methods becomes less relevant. CSU aims for growth in its share of the Australian market for distance education (and possibly for an expanded share of an international market). This predicted growth needs to be underpinned by strong empirical evidence of factors that will produce that growth, including rewarding learning experiences for students.

As well, CSU needs to be vigilant in considering the full range of business continuity risks, particularly as they relate to the University's IT infrastructure. This will be particularly important given CSU's continuing and increasing dependence on flexible learning as a strategy.

Recommendation 3

AUQA recommends that CSU develop more comprehensive and systematic approaches to addressing the strategic risks inherent in its goal of leadership in the quality delivery of flexible learning.

The risks inherent in teaching partnership arrangements also may need to be better reflected in risk registers and in the thinking of the Audit and Risk Committee.

2.5.2 Governance

The University governing body, the Council, has conducted an informative and thorough self-review process and appears to be functioning well. A review of University governance was undertaken in 2007 and has led to a reorganisation of Council committees. Other improvements to Council functioning include the revision of meeting rules, revision of delegations and the use of electronic business papers. The Audit Panel finds that Council actively aims to hold the University's senior executive accountable for the University's performance.

CSU uses the term 'Academic Senate' to refer to the senior academic committee of the University and the term 'Senate' to refer to its overall academic governance structure, including faculty and school boards.

There were two recommendations relating to Academic Senate in the 2004 AUQA Audit Report. The first of these related to Academic Senate's role in fostering collegial discussion and debate and in leading academic policy development and monitoring, and also to Senate's formal relationship to Council in assuring the quality of the University's academic activities. The second recommendation asked Academic Senate to reconsider the mechanisms in place for assuring the quality of teaching and learning within CSU, to ensure that these mechanisms are able to

effectively and efficiently support continuous improvement of the University's academic activities.

Academic Senate has initiated a range of improvements to academic processes at CSU since the 2004 AUQA audit, including the development of new policies and oversight of a major process of curriculum renewal through the CSU Degree Initiative (section 3.3.2). Another major initiative, which AUQA endorses, is the revision of the Academic Manual, the official repository of all Academic Senate policy. The process of simplifying policies and separating policy from procedures, delegations and guidelines, is underway. Academic Senate has supported the early stages of development of a set of CSU standards with respect to learning and teaching, research, and engagement, entitled the 'Next Steps' document.

In 2008, Academic Senate conducted a wide-ranging self-review, which examined, among other matters, processes for assuring the quality of teaching and learning. Subsequently, Senate monitoring of learning and teaching performance by CSU discipline has been introduced. The self-review has led to improved processes for collegial discussion, while other improvements to policy and processes are in train, including the development of a University-wide moderation standard. At CSU, moderation is employed quite widely as the University uses a significant number of external sessional markers in some disciplines.

Affirmation 2

AUQA affirms the findings of CSU's Academic Senate Self-Review, including the development of a University-wide moderation standard.

The Audit Panel formed the view that Academic Senate and its committees regard themselves as responsible primarily for the development of policy. Responsibility for academic oversight of many matters is devolved to faculties, either through governance committees or through line management accountabilities. Although major items, such as new course proposals, are considered by the Academic Programs Committee of Academic Senate, CSU makes it clear that faculty course committees are responsible, within Academic Senate policy, for the approval and review of curriculum, course structure, entry requirements and other matters.

This approach to academic governance has some advantages but it also runs the risk of the central academic committees not knowing the ways in which policy and procedural matters and challenges are being handled across the University as a whole. One example, discussed in section 3.3.6, is the granting of credit for previous studies. There is also a risk that the comparative performance of students is not monitored comprehensively. Moreover, if responsibility for the implementation of policy is given to line managers, there can be a reduction in transparency or widespread learning about the effectiveness of policy implementation.

The Audit Panel considers that Academic Senate needs to more actively monitor the quality of academic processes and policy implementation outcomes across the whole University. To do so will require Academic Senate committees to take a more proactive role in using evidence-based approaches to quality assurance and in identifying gaps in policy.

There are eight committees of Academic Senate in operation at CSU, as well as some strategic committees which operate outside Academic Senate, including the University Course Planning Committee and the Research Planning Committee (as distinct from the Senate's Research Management Committee). The Presiding Officer of Academic Senate is a member of both these

committees. The Audit Panel explored the rationale for these committees operating outside Senate and finds there are good reasons for the separation of functions.

However, in the Panel's view, some of the consolidated information on students' academic performance viewed by the University Course Planning Committee also needs to be considered by committees of Academic Senate, including the Academic Programs Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee. These two committees need to be able to review trends in retention and students' academic performance if they are to be able to assure Academic Senate, and Council, of the academic quality of the University.

Recommendation 4

AUQA recommends that CSU ensure that Academic Senate is better able to actively monitor the quality of academic processes and outcomes across the whole University.

3 THEME: PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING

The first theme for this audit is Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning. The theme was proposed by the University and was selected by AUQA in consideration of the significance of the theme to the University's strategic priorities and, given CSU's student population, the relationship of this theme to another of the University's strategic priorities, namely, flexible learning. In this audit, AUQA has checked the implementation of the relevant 2004 AUQA Audit Report affirmations and recommendations.

The scope of this theme includes:

- graduate outcomes and academic standards
- graduate and student satisfaction
- graduate attributes
- professional accreditation
- curriculum development, design and review (including design for flexible delivery)
- assessment design and practice
- design and delivery of placements and practice-based learning within courses (all modes)
- support for student placements and practice-based learning
- articulation and credit transfer
- infrastructure to support professional education and practice-based learning.

3.1 *Strategic Objectives and Current Provision of Professional Education*

3.1.1 Strategic Directions

The University Strategy 2007–2011 has four key objectives, including an objective to 'provide distinctive educational programs for the professions that prepare students for work and citizenship and which:

- Are recognised by, and developed in collaboration with, the professions, particularly through practicum placements
- Are accessible to students who have the capacity for university study
- Foster ethical practice
- Promote international understanding including opportunities for international exchange, and
- Maintain high levels of satisfaction among graduates, employers and the University's communities'.

The University's Performance Portfolio states that CSU has committed itself to being 'a national university for excellence in education for the professions' (PF p35), noting that a major aim of professional education 'is to prepare graduates for workplace and professional responsibilities' (ibid.)

The University's Course Plan and the Learning and Teaching Plan have as their first objectives enhancing the quality, scope and good practice of CSU's profile of professional courses, including expanding the scholarship of professional education and practice-based learning

(PF p37). AUQA endorses CSU's claim that its 'strategic goals and aspirations for Theme 2 are strongly reflected throughout operational plans at all levels' (PF p39).

The University's self-review for the AUQA audit was the first part of a planned series of three stages in the development of a benchmarking cycle for professional and fieldwork education. The next two stages will involve more internal and external benchmarking of relevant courses.

3.1.2 Professional Education Courses at CSU

CSU offers some 450 courses (programs). The University has historically provided professional education across disciplines including education, policing, journalism, psychology, nursing and allied health professions. While a primary purpose of its course offerings is to meet the needs of its rural and regional communities, the University has over 70% of the national enrolments in librarianship and information management and over 80% of national enrolments in policing and related fields (PF p46).

One of the University's strategic objectives is to expand its range of professional courses, both to serve community needs and to consolidate its profile. Among the new courses recently introduced or planned to be introduced at CSU are:

- Bachelor of Veterinary Biology, Bachelor of Veterinary Science
- Bachelor of Dental Science, Bachelor of Oral Health (Therapy/Hygiene)
- Bachelor of Health and Rehabilitation Science (from 2009)
- Bachelor of Clinical Practice (Paramedic), an entry pathway to the NSW Ambulance Service
- Extension of early childhood programs
- Physiotherapy at the Orange Campus (from 2010).

It is evident that the University has carefully considered and managed the implementation of new courses, some of which involve considerable capital and maintenance costs for facilities. The University states that it has also been a pioneer in offering professional courses through distance education, including social work, policing, accounting, clinical psychology and other allied health courses. CSU has plans to further extend the range of professional courses available through flexible delivery.

AUQA's finding for this theme are based to a considerable extent on a sample of professional education courses that were selected for follow-up through documents and interviews. These courses included: nursing; education; policing; and veterinary science.

The University notes that the term 'professional' is used broadly across the University, and that taking a very wide definition, it could be said that almost all undergraduate degrees at CSU involve preparation for the professions. The term 'professional education' is used by the University to refer to 'professional entry education at undergraduate degree or graduate-entry level where professional entry involves some form of course accreditation or recognition by a professional body' (Response to Request for Further Information question 2.1).

CSU estimates that approximately one third of its courses provide professional education, encompassing about 52% of student enrolments and generating around 63% of equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL).

These professional courses, and their availability through distance or flexible education, allow the University to better meet the needs of rural and regional populations and to focus student learning on specific issues that are highly relevant to rural practice.

Commendation 3

AUQA commends CSU for its continuing emphasis on the provision of professional education courses, including the use of flexible delivery, to support regional communities.

In the 2004 AUQA Audit Report, CSU was commended for the actions it had taken to help foster an understanding amongst staff of operating as 'One University' across its multiple campuses. The Audit Panel finds that there continue to be strong mechanisms at CSU for cross-campus discussion, including the regular use of videoconferencing. Since that time, CSU has progressively restructured responsibilities for courses across campuses, to consolidate disciplines across several campuses. From 2010, most schools at CSU will operate across campuses. The Audit Panel regards this consolidation as helpful in increasing the University's emphasis on professional education within discipline areas.

Commendation 4

AUQA commends CSU for its success in operating as 'One University' across its multiple campuses in New South Wales and for the consolidation of disciplines across its campuses to support its focus on professional education.

3.2 Graduate and Student Outcomes

3.2.1 Graduate Outcomes

On 2008 data from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), the University's performance is below the means for the sector and for CSU's comparator cohort on the measures of: overall satisfaction; generic skills; good teaching; learning resources; and student support (data item 5.3). Apart from the Student Support Scale, for which CSU data is available for only one year, the other results exhibit a downwards trend since 2004. CSU's performance for 2008 on the Good Teaching Scale is below the sector and cohort averages in several of the University's main fields of study (Education, Management and Commerce, Society and Culture), although it is above the sector average for Health.

CSU uses its internal Student Experience Questionnaire as a primary measure of 'real time' student satisfaction, with comparatively less emphasis given to internal dissemination of CEQ outcomes, which measure graduate satisfaction. CSU also regards the CEQ trend data as stable rather than declining. However, if CSU is to achieve its strategic objectives of leadership in professional education and flexible learning, it must address its current comparatively low levels of graduate satisfaction expressed through the CEQ.

AUQA encourages Council and senior academic managers at CSU to ensure there is continued monitoring of the University's performance on CEQ measures and widespread acknowledgement among academics of the need to improve these outcomes. Given the University's positive results on the Graduate Pathways Survey (discussed below), CSU should consider further examination of the reasons for comparatively low levels of satisfaction among new bachelor degree graduates.

On graduate employment, as assessed by 2007 data from the Graduate Destination Survey, the University's proportion of graduates in full-time work is below the sector average but just above the cohort average. The University's percentage of graduates in full-time study is significantly

less than the sector and cohort percentages (data items 5.4 and 5.5). As the IAF Portfolio notes, this is likely to be related to CSU's distinctive course profile, as graduates in courses such as nursing and education are likely to move straight into employment or already be employed, rather than pursuing further studies immediately after graduation.

In 2008, the University participated in the new Graduate Pathways Survey (GPS) developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research, which surveyed graduates five years after graduation. The University performs comparatively well on GPS measures. Graduates' self assessments of outcomes from the bachelor degrees they completed in 2002 are higher for CSU graduates than the average for all institutions (data item 5.6). The proportion of graduates from CSU in work or study, one, three and five years following graduation is around the average, while their median salary is slightly above the average for all institutions at one, three and five years following graduation. CSU also rates above the average for all institutions on measures of the relevance of the degree to employment and of graduates' overall satisfaction and experience as students.

There were 385 Indigenous students enrolled at CSU in 2007, comprising about 14% of all Indigenous higher education students in New South Wales. The University's access and participation ratios for Indigenous students are just above the sector average and above the State average. CSU's retention ratios are similar to the sector and the State ratios. While success ratios have fluctuated a little, in 2007, CSU's Indigenous students' success ratio was above the State average and close to the sector average (data items 5.7 to 5.9). Indigenous staff represent 1.5% of all staff at CSU, noticeably above the State and national average employment rates for the sector. Developments relating to Indigenous education are noted in section 3.3.7.

3.2.2 Student Retention and Grades

The University's performance on student retention is discussed in section 2.3. As noted in that section, CSU is encouraged to undertake further analysis of factors that may influence attrition rates and if necessary modify its administrative systems to ensure that it captures data about students' broad entry pathways.

The University does not routinely report the actual spread of grade distributions by student cohort, although faculty boards of examiners do compare grade distributions across cohorts of students studying at different locations to identify whether the grade distributions at locations such as teaching partnerships are significantly different to those at CSU's home campuses. However, without the ability to compare the actual distributions, committees of Academic Senate are not able readily to identify courses or subjects across the University where the pattern of grade distributions seems abnormal, or to monitor whether or not there may be a tendency to grade inflation. The University's self-review of internationalisation (section 4.2) also recommended that CSU 'consider systematic reporting of attrition and progression across international cohorts to enable identification of issues and comparison to domestic cohorts' (SM 3.02).

AUQA urges CSU to expand its ability to track and review students' retention and grade performance by cohort and suggests that CSU may find it helpful to examine practice at other universities in this regard.

Recommendation 5

AUQA recommends that CSU improve its data reporting to ensure that the retention, progress and grade point averages of students from differing cohorts are routinely considered by Senate and academic managers across the University.

3.2.3 Student Satisfaction with Learning and Student Engagement

The University monitors student satisfaction with learning and teaching through a range of surveys, including:

- the Online Evaluation of Subjects (OES), which includes a set of 11 mandatory core items with a facility to customise from a categorised item bank
- a Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) conducted early in students' second year of their course and based upon the CEQ
- participation in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE).

A consolidated report on annual OES performance at faculty, school and discipline levels is considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) and available online. Responses for core items are provided to heads of school, while data from the customised items are retained by subject coordinators. The University is making efforts to improve response rates.

The Audit Panel notes that there are differences between SEQ and CEQ outcomes in certain areas, including graduate attributes. SEQ results tend to be considerably more positive. The University is encouraged to further investigate the reasons for these differences.

Outcomes from the 2007 and 2008 AUSSE show that CSU scores well on items for work integrated learning compared to all Australian universities, an encouraging finding for the University's emphasis on fieldwork education (data item 5.10). As noted in section 2.3, the University is focusing on increased student engagement as a way to improve retention.

Schools are required to provide annual reports to the LTC reviewing the data from these sources and identifying improvements.

Although CSU places great store on SEQ results and there are many elements of good practice in its current approach, the University will need to give greater attention to ensuring that domestic students treat the SEQ and OES processes seriously and are aware of improvements arising from their feedback. The variability in student experiences commented on in section 3.5.3 suggests that the University cannot afford to be complacent about fairly high SEQ and OES scores. The Audit Panel suggests that staff of the University discuss with students their attitudes to the SEQ and OES and, if necessary, explore other means of hearing and responding to student concerns.

The level of engagement of CSU's international students is discussed in section 4.6.1.

3.2.4 Employer Engagement

The University has active industry engagement on advisory boards for a range of professional courses and these boards appear to work well. The Audit Panel spoke with a range of major employers, who expressed a high regard for CSU graduates. These employers appreciate the commitment of many CSU graduates to working in regional locations and their understanding of the specific needs and demands of regional and rural employment. Academics in many disciplines have been proactive in establishing networks among employers and these academics

would benefit from an allocation of time to ensure they are able to continue such networking activities.

Commendation 5

AUQA commends CSU for its engagement with regional employers and for the levels of satisfaction with CSU graduates expressed by these employers.

3.3 Academic Standards for Professional Education

3.3.1 Professional Accreditation and Benchmarking

Professional accreditation and recognition in many disciplines is central to CSU's goals for professional education, and the University gives due attention to professional accreditation through Senate processes and committees. Faculties maintain separate registers of the accreditation status of all courses. CSU could consider whether it would be useful to maintain a central register of all professional accreditations held by the University and the dates of forthcoming accreditation reviews, to ensure any synergies with CSU initiatives are identified.

The University provided the Audit Panel with information on all matters raised in recent professional accreditation reports for CSU courses. This information demonstrates the ability of the University to synthesise readily a range of information from professional body accreditations. The Audit Panel considers it may be helpful for the University to periodically draw this information together for consideration by Academic Senate of any systemic issues and to ensure that Senate is well-informed on how well CSU is meeting professional accreditation requirements.

CSU is engaging with other universities in structured benchmarking of some courses. Benchmarking of physiotherapy courses is occurring among CSU and six other institutions, while CSU, Deakin University and the Australian Catholic University are benchmarking teacher education courses.

3.3.2 CSU Degree Initiative

The CSU Degree Initiative is stated by the University to be a major review of the curriculum of undergraduate degrees which is establishing new curriculum principles and course development processes. The Deputy Presiding Officer of the Academic Senate has been appointed as the director of this major curriculum renewal project.

The aims of the Initiative are:

1. *to review CSU's current degrees to determine the extent to which CSU already achieves the curriculum and course structure objectives of its Strategies and Plans for the period 2007–2011*
2. *to develop and implement proposals for the better achievement of the curriculum and course structure objectives of the CSU's Strategies and Plans 2007–2011*
3. *to develop proposals for monitoring and reporting on the achievement of the curriculum and course structure objectives of CSU's Strategies and Plans 2007–2011.*

Affirmation 3

AUQA affirms the establishment by CSU of the CSU Degree Initiative as a potentially systematic approach to curriculum renewal and implementation of its flexible learning agenda.

The Initiative aims to ensure that CSU courses meet eight commitments 'to ensure that CSU graduates would be people who:

- have had the opportunity for international experience
- have been prepared for citizenship
- are culturally competent
- understand the culture and history of Indigenous communities
- [understand] sustainability in financial, social and environmental senses by an
 - internationalised curriculum
 - that is strong in the teaching of ethics
 - and has an enhanced clinical/practicum strand'.

AUQA observes that these eight commitments seem to mix desired graduate attributes (section 3.3.3) and curriculum content requirements in ways that may not be helpful to articulating a clear rationale for course renewal.

The process to implement the Initiative is still evolving. One concrete next step is the funding of a pilot study of four courses in 2010 to build a scaleable model of curriculum renewal for full implementation from 2011 onwards. This appears to be a sensible way to proceed. Other elements refer to the development of a database to map current coverage of the Degree Initiative commitments in current courses and inventories of faculty-specific and discipline-specific case material and instances of best practice.

AUQA suggests that once the University has clarified desired graduate attributes and course elements, a schedule could be prepared of courses that will be revised each year. The Audit Panel understands the University's desire to involve academics from all levels across the University but cautions CSU against premature 'mainstreaming' of the Degree Initiative.

With the Degree Initiative and plans for improvements in flexible learning and fieldwork education, CSU has set itself an ambitious agenda for change across its academic activities. If these changes are to be realised as intended, CSU will need to ensure it has a very clear prioritisation of actions and awareness of their interdependencies, as well as of their potential impact on staff and systems. The Audit Panel urges CSU to adopt explicit and robust change management processes for the implementation of these initiatives similar to its well-established change management processes for IT projects.

Recommendation 6

AUQA recommends that CSU adopt explicit change management strategies to ensure the effective and coordinated implementation of a range of initiatives in curriculum renewal, flexible learning and fieldwork education.

The Audit Panel observes that faculty sub-deans for learning and teaching, who are highly enthusiastic and committed, can play a valuable role in the change management process and in ensuring the systematic adoption of initiatives in curriculum renewal, together with their colleagues who support flexible learning and fieldwork education. AUQA suggests that the

University consider providing these sub-deans with some discretionary funding to support strategic and systematic improvements within each faculty that are outside the scope of other internal grants to individuals.

3.3.3 Graduate Attributes

The University has recognised that its approach to graduate attributes needs much attention as part of the CSU Degree Initiative: in fact, the Degree Initiative was originally conceived as a way to ensure curricula were able to support achievement of the desired attributes. An internal report on the situation observed:

The way in which CSU's GAs [graduate attributes] have been developed to date appears sometimes to have been ad hoc, non-consultative and haphazard. As a result, there is at best moderate overlap between the lists of Graduate Attributes in the current Undergraduate Prospectus, the current CASIMS [Course and Subject Information Management System] Course Document Guidelines, the 'indicators' proposed for measuring the acquisition of Graduate Attributes in CSU's Course Review Policy...and the Degree Initiative. This confuses staff as well as current and prospective students about what CSU's preferred Graduate Attributes are (SM 01.15).

The Panel's observations support this finding. Currently, there is little awareness of those generic skills the University seeks to impart. This lack of awareness may be reflected in the University's comparatively low CEQ scores on the Generic Skills Scale. It is surprising in view of the University's goals of providing distinctive educational programs for the professions and preparing students for work and citizenship.

The most recent approach, in the context of the Degree Initiative, is for CSU graduate attributes to be defined as an 'outcome' of the curriculum renewal process in the Initiative rather than as a precursor to the process. The Audit Panel finds the reasoning for this approach to graduate attributes to be unconvincing and considers there is a risk that desired graduate attributes will not be considered for a considerable period of time.

As noted in section 3.3.2, some of the eight commitments appear to be graduate attributes in themselves, while others are course requirements. The University also mentions a need to ensure that its graduates have other 'employability skills', such as effective communication, analytical skills and problem solving skills.

In the view of the Audit Panel, there is an immediate need for CSU to clarify, within the Degree Initiative, its view of graduate attributes and how these can be embedded in undergraduate courses. In doing this, CSU may benefit from projects currently under way within the higher education sector in Australia.

Recommendation 7

AUQA recommends that CSU clarify for students and staff its definition of CSU graduate attributes, the desired learning outcomes for students across all undergraduate courses and the University's approach to the embedding of these graduate attributes in curriculum design and assessment.

3.3.4 Partnerships in Professional Education

CSU has several partnership arrangements for professional education, governed by agreements, such as those between the University and several regional area health services for nursing education.

The University's largest partnership for professional education is with the NSW Police Force. The State of New South Wales is unique in Australia in requiring study at a university as the pathway to becoming a probationary constable. There are several entry pathways to the police training components of the course, which are conducted at the NSW Police Academy in Goulburn. Academic and practical subjects are jointly staffed by CSU and NSW Police Force teachers.

The partnership is governed by a very detailed agreement and a range of active joint management committees, including academic committees and a committee to review the implementation of the agreement. Direct feedback from serving police officers ensures that 'employer' satisfaction with graduates is monitored continuously.

It is evident that issues in combining academic and very specific professional education and training requirements have been thoroughly worked through and addressed by both parties. These requirements include the need for great flexibility in academic staffing, due to substantial variations in the size of entering cohorts.

The current partnership agreement is the product of an extended period of collaborative provision and, in the view of the Audit Panel, is a model of good practice. The Panel notes that an adequate level of resourcing is one of the features of this collaboration, including access by students to the extensive holdings of the police reference library at Goulburn.

Commendation 6

AUQA commends CSU, with the New South Wales Police Force, for their management and operation of a successful partnership in police education.

The Audit Panel considers that this model of partnership in professional education is an exemplar for other partnerships and notes that CSU is seeking similar partnerships in other disciplines.

3.3.5 Course and Subject Approval and Review

Faculties at CSU play the major role in approval of courses and subjects and in their review. Faculty course committees have delegated authority to approve revisions or modifications to existing courses.

The course approval process is well-documented and controlled by the use of an online repository, the Course and Subject Information Management System (CASIMS), which not only retains content and thus a record of changes to courses and subjects, but also tracks courses and subjects through various phases of the course approval process. CASIMS was developed in-house by CSU and current improvements to functionality include better linkages with other CSU systems. All course material must be created within CASIMS and course development must be informed by an advisory process involving external stakeholders.

Recommendation 9 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report was that CSU establish a more rigorous process for ensuring that subject outlines comply with University policy both in the nature of their content and their currency. In 2006, Academic Senate determined that all subject outlines

should be provided online. A previous Subject Outline Management System is now being replaced by a Mandatory Subject Information System (MSIS) within CSU Interact, the University's student learning management system. The MSIS interacts with CASIMS and its implementation has been a significant activity across CSU in 2009.

Commendation 7

AUQA commends CSU for its development and use of a single electronic repository for course and subject content and approvals and for the development of a Mandatory Subject Information System to support the use of consistent information across the University.

The Audit Panel suggests that CSU review its arrangements for quality assurance of subject information and, if necessary, provide more detailed guidance on the content of subject outlines than that currently given in the Academic Manual.

The University's policy on course accreditation requires courses to be reviewed every five years and these reviews are duly conducted. The CSU approach to course reviews is to combine the process of review with that of incorporating improvements, so that when review documents come to Senate committees, they come with suggested course and subject changes. The Audit Panel notes that external academic membership of course review committees is limited often to one person and that the approach used is likely to favour incremental change rather than any fundamental revision of the course.

AUQA suggests that the University consider whether the current course review process adequately assists the University to ensure that its courses are coherent, reflective of CSU's own commitments and expected standards nationally and internationally, and appropriately configured for flexible delivery. The need for the CSU Degree Initiative indicates that the established course review process may not be producing this assurance. Experience with curriculum review through the Degree Initiative is likely to provide a means to compare the two processes.

3.3.6 Credit Transfer and Advanced Standing

CSU has given considerable attention to improving arrangements for credit transfer for domestic students, following a self-assessment review of the University's policy and practices on credit against external reference points conducted in 2007 by the Academic Programs Committee. The review found much practice at CSU was consistent with principles in these reference points and identified some improvements.

In respect of the theme for this Audit, the University has noted that credit transfer is less frequently awarded for fieldwork education subjects due to specific professional accreditation requirements. This issue is being further considered by CSU.

Approval of credit for particular subjects has been delegated by CSU to faculties. Although this approach is efficient, it means that the University does not have a process through Academic Senate for periodic checking of credit that has been approved or identifying trends in the granting of credit. The Audit Panel notes that some matters, such as the granting of credit in CSU courses for Certificate IV studies, should be kept under active review and compared with practice across the higher education sector, to ensure appropriate policy guidance is provided. The need for CSU to audit the approval of credit for students at CSU's partner teaching providers is noted in section 4.5.2.

Recommendation 8

AUQA recommends that CSU's Academic Senate keep under active review the credit granted within faculties.

One of the recommendations from the 2007 review was that CSU give priority to the support of a credit transfer precedent database. At the time of the Audit Visit, the University had implemented a publicly-available version of this database, and is progressively populating it with 'block' credits approved for studies with other education providers. In having achieved a working and user-friendly database, which prospective students can use to check for approved credit transfer, the University is demonstrating good practice in the provision and management of information.

Commendation 8

AUQA commends CSU for having implemented a publicly-available credit transfer precedent database.

3.3.7 Support for Indigenous Peoples

The University notes that it has strengthened its commitment to Indigenous communities and Indigenous education since the 2004 AUQA Audit Report. Given the diverse areas from which CSU draws its students, the University needs to be able to assist students from many different Indigenous communities, in NSW and more widely across Australia.

The University funds Indigenous Student Services on four campuses and provides resourcing to ensure engagement with a wide range of Indigenous communities.

CSU is implementing an Indigenous Education Strategy and an Indigenous Employment Strategy. Several of its professional courses, such as nursing and education, have embedded components on Indigenous matters. Under the CSU Degree Initiative, the University is making clear progress on the incorporation of Indigenous Australian content into onshore undergraduate courses.

CSU has also established a Centre for Indigenous Studies in the Faculty of Education, while the Division of Library Services has an Indigenous Liaison Team. In 2008, the University was commended by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for establishing Reconciliation Scholarships for Indigenous Australian Students.

Commendation 9

AUQA commends CSU for its engagement with a wide range of Indigenous communities and for its support for Indigenous students.

3.3.8 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Under the LTC, the University has a standing committee on plagiarism management. The Audit Panel finds that there is a high awareness by students in professional courses of the reasons why they must not plagiarise and of the importance of correct referencing.

3.4 Practice-Based and Fieldwork Education

Over several years, CSU has given considerable attention to the quality of its fieldwork education, a term now used by the University in preference to 'practice-based' education.

Among the projects that have existed for some time is that of profiling fieldwork education at the University. A 2005 project established that 85% of schools at the University had courses that included fieldwork education.

More recent information indicates that 30% of CSU courses have either compulsory or optional fieldwork education, with the majority involving compulsory fieldwork. These courses were being taken by 59% of enrolled students in 2008 or around 70% of the University's total student load (EFTSL).

3.4.1 Review and Improvement of Fieldwork Education

The University has taken an increasingly structured approach to the identification of issues in fieldwork education and their management, recognising a need for its focus on fieldwork education to be comprehensively reflected in policies and procedures of all types.

Current review and improvement activities for fieldwork education at CSU are to:

- expand fieldwork (practice-based education) across CSU
- internal benchmarking
- review of fieldwork education management systems
- review course documentation, and information retrieval
- review use of student feedback on fieldwork education
- review resourcing and support of students on fieldwork placements
- review fieldwork education staffing policies and support
- review staff development for fieldwork education staff
- expand resources information and support for fieldwork education program managers
- improve students' and staff information literacy education
- review of support by the Division of Library Services and Division of Information Technology for students on placements and fieldwork educators (PF p62).

The Audit Panel observes that there is active work under way at CSU to carry out these improvements and that further stages of review and improvement have been identified. AUQA finds that CSU is taking a holistic and systematic approach to quality assurance and improvement of fieldwork education.

Commendation 10

AUQA commends CSU for taking a systematic and comprehensive approach to quality assurance and improvement for fieldwork education.

3.4.2 Management of Fieldwork Education

Fieldwork education, which requires students to have a practicum or placement at an external organisation or through a University clinic, is an increasingly complex activity for universities to manage, due to the range of legal issues and agreements which need to be in place to protect all parties. CSU has for some time been working to ensure that there is adequate central oversight and review of these agreements, including knowledge of where to find them. Some agreements are with individual organisations while others are with agencies responsible for a range of placement locations, such as hospitals. A standard agreement template has been developed by the University. Agreements are signed by heads of schools and CSU does not currently operate a central register of agreements, although it is looking at ways to hold copies electronically. Insurances for placements are managed centrally. One specific area that is being addressed by

the University in consultation with the NSW Department of Education is the development of agreements for education placements.

The University has acknowledged a need to clarify its processes for the development, approval and storage of policy, agreements and insurance documents related to fieldwork education. A further area for improvement is the review of current agreements, to identify good practice and the potential for including such good practice in other agreements.

Practicums and fieldwork placements for a significant number of courses are managed electronically through the University's Banner student administration system. However, this system is not suitable for all placements and a variety of other systems are used. A working group is considering options for improved practicum and placement management, including enhancements to the Banner functionality. The Audit Panel encourages CSU to continue work on a central repository for all fieldwork agreements and endorses the action in progress to develop improved practicum management systems.

CSU has also identified a need to ensure that internal systems allow for the ready identification of fieldwork education subjects and components through better coding and description. This identification will allow CSU to keep track of fieldwork education and facilitate internal benchmarking.

Affirmation 4

AUQA affirms the actions being taken by CSU to ensure better oversight and management of fieldwork education including improved practicum management and information management in fieldwork education.

Student fieldwork placements are organised in different ways across the University. Fieldwork education coordinators are present in a range of disciplines. In other disciplines, CSU provides some support for students to find placements or else students find their own placements, especially if they are studying by distance education. Considerable attention is given by CSU staff to reviewing and managing fieldwork education placements in a course such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery, which is provided by distance education. A sample of induction information for placements viewed by the Audit Panel showed that students are given a good amount of information and advice in advance about their placements.

The Audit Panel observes that not all external students are aware of the degree of oversight exercised by the University for fieldwork placements, and suggests that CSU ensure that all students know of the role that CSU academics and support staff will take in their placement. Moreover, not all students feel certain that placements are allocated fairly and transparently. A number of external students would appreciate being given greater notice of their placements, plus more information at the outset of their course about the specific arrangements and conditions that apply to placements (section 2.2). The University is urged to address these matters.

3.4.3 Academic Policies for Fieldwork Education

The University has identified a need to review existing academic regulations 'for their relevance to the assessment practices used in fieldwork and to facilitate access to these regulations by co-locating relevant fieldwork regulations and policies in the Academic Manual' (PF p58). Among the specific matters identified by the University for further consideration are: greater clarification of the responsibilities of external assessors; processes for students to seek review of

assessments made by fieldwork educators; and processes for precluding and withdrawing students from placements. The Audit Panel observes that CSU should consider examining the extent to which placements are graded 'pass/fail' only and whether this is appropriate in every case.

CSU notes that independent feedback from students on their placement experience, ie feedback that is separate to reports that students may prepare for assessment of their placement, is able to be obtained from customisable items in the OES. However, under current processes, these results are only able to be accessed by subject coordinators and their use may not be systematic across all fieldwork subjects. The University has established a working party of the LTC working party to review the current methods of evaluating fieldwork education. AUQA agrees with the need, identified by CSU, for better student feedback on the fieldwork elements of subjects.

3.4.4 Fieldwork Education Standards

To improve its governance and management of fieldwork education, the University has developed a set of internal Fieldwork Education Standards, for use by schools with fieldwork education components.

These Standards cover 12 domains of fieldwork education:

- program design
- learning and teaching
- students' work
- quality and risk management
- student support
- stakeholder satisfaction
- fieldwork education management system
- fieldwork education sites
- industry partnerships
- staff development
- continuous quality improvement
- resourcing.

As part of the self-review prior to the AUQA audit, CSU identified 32 courses as exemplars of professional education and practice-based learning. The schools responsible for these courses undertook an initial review against the draft Standards using a self-assessment tool in November 2008 and will repeat this process in 2009. The areas of most concern identified through the self-assessment tool were staff development and resourcing. The Education for Practice Institute will use findings from self-assessments to refine priorities for improvement and professional development. AUQA considers the development and use of the standards to be an example of good practice and encourages CSU to consider using some independent auditing against the Standards once they are embedded.

Commendation 11

AUQA commends CSU for the development of Fieldwork Education Standards and self-assessment tools, and encourages the University to continue its program of self-assessment against the standards, in order to identify improvements and areas for development.

3.5 Support for Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning

3.5.1 EFPI and RIPPLE

Among the investments made by CSU in supporting fieldwork education are the establishment in 2007 of the Research Institute for Professional Practice (RIPPLE) and the Education for Practice Institute (EFPI). These two Institutes provide a strong signal of the University's commitment to practice-based learning and have the potential to play major roles in advancing professional education at CSU.

RIPPLE is a multi-disciplinary centre established to research the field of professional practice and its implications for professional learning and education. It has established impressive international collaborative networks to ensure that professional practice at CSU is informed by the latest research.

EFPI is leading the development of Fieldwork Education Standards (section 3.4.4) and provides teaching fellowships, including Indigenous Teaching Fellowships, as well as seed grants, to assist academics to examine and improve aspects of professional education and practice.

EFPI is involved in a range of improvements to fieldwork education identified by the University, including improving access to CSU systems for external staff. The Audit Panel notes the need, in some courses, for further preparation and training of supervisors or preceptors and a need to ensure that students are aware of how their fieldwork supervisors have been briefed.

3.5.2 Fieldwork Education Network

In 2002, staff at CSU established a Professional Experience Network (PEN), which operates as a forum to support fieldwork education and staff involved in fieldwork management or support. PEN has now become the Fieldwork Education Network (FEN) and continues to operate as a cross-faculty community of practice. In 2008, a dedicated PEN workshop was held as part of CSU's annual education conference. There is cross-representation on the management committees of EFPI and FEN and the Audit Panel observes the close working relationship between EFPI and members of FEN. In addition, EFPI provides infrastructure support for FEN.

AUQA finds that FEN has been instrumental in identifying needs for systematisation and sharing of good practice in fieldwork education, and that FEN members are greatly encouraged by the support shown to them by the University.

Commendation 12

AUQA commends CSU for its serious engagement with professional practice and fieldwork education through a range of initiatives, including the establishment of institutes to advance professional practice and the Fieldwork Education Network.

The Audit Panel finds, however, that an informed understanding of pedagogy of fieldwork education is not widespread among CSU academics. Staff are very supportive of the role of fieldwork education in student learning but many are less able to explain the ways in which student learning is enhanced through placements, aside from a general notion of 'learning by doing'. Continued attention to practice-based learning will require academic staff and fieldwork supervisors to better conceptualise the teaching and learning objectives and associated

strategies. Good examples of such conceptualisation are available in publications from RIPPLE but have yet to be widely discussed across the University.

AUQA observes that CSU needs to be able to see evidence of operational impact from these initiatives. Similar considerations in terms of operational impact apply to the work of the Flexible Learning Institute (section 2.1).

Recommendation 9

AUQA recommends that CSU make stronger efforts to ensure academics and others involved in fieldwork education have an understanding of pedagogical approaches to practice-based education and the desired learning outcomes.

3.5.3 Staff Development for Flexible Learning, including Professional and Fieldwork Education

The activities of the Flexible Learning Institute (FLI) and educational developers in the faculties provide significant support to the achievement of CSU's goals for professional education. As noted in section 2.1, the University is facing some imperatives regarding the future development of flexible education. The FLI Strategic Plan addresses some of these challenges.

FLI provides teaching fellowships to enable individuals to redevelop subjects for flexible delivery and to act as change leaders. The Institute also provides seed grants to support small-scale, innovative, embedded projects that explore selected priority areas, including a small amount of funding for a mentor.

As for EFPI projects and RIPPLE activities, CSU must continue to find ways to ensure widespread operational diffusion of the outcomes of FLI projects. The annual CSUED conference, which in 2009 is hosted by FLI, is one method, but more proactive means of adoption of changes, either through courses or by faculties, may be required.

Academic staff professional development at CSU is coordinated by the Division of Learning and Teaching Services, working in cooperation with FLI and EFPI as appropriate. The University has reviewed and updated its Foundations of University Learning and Teaching program and Tertiary Teaching Colloquium, to allow the program to be offered online as well as in face-to-face mode and to be available to adjunct staff, including fieldwork educators. The Tertiary Teaching Colloquium has now been replaced by a work-integrated learning project in the University's Graduate Certificate of University Learning and Teaching.

DLTS provides grants for staff to research the scholarship of teaching, rounding out a series of opportunities for staff to seek internal funding to improve aspects of their teaching and scholarship in support of better professional and fieldwork education.

These funding opportunities are well-regarded by academic staff. The Audit Panel notes however that the amount of time taken by academics in applying for this internal funding may be slightly counterproductive. There may be alternative options to more efficiently support staff to develop their teaching, for example through workload models.

Despite the University's considerable support schemes for good teaching, the Audit Panel observed significant variability in the learning experiences of students at CSU. Many students expressed themselves as satisfied and commented positively on the approachability and personal support they receive from academic staff. However, the Panel received deeply negative

comments from other students. Themes identified in the negative comments relating to professional disciplines are:

- poor communication from lecturers, including a perceived lack of engagement through the CSU Interact forums
- disorganisation in structure and activities of subjects and assessment weightings
- a lack of predictability and consistency in experience from subject to subject.
- inconsistency in assessment, marking and feedback
- outdated information in subjects and duplication of content, and
- little use of technology to help external students feel engaged, reduce distance and increase interactivity.

The 2004 AUQA Audit Report recommended that CSU further develop its ability to achieve its goal of exemplary academic service to all students, however and wherever they may be studying. In 2009, AUQA finds that although CSU has made many efforts to improve consistency in the student learning experience, this need is still apparent and may need to be addressed in other ways.

Recommendation 10

AUQA recommends that CSU explore additional means to ensure a consistently high quality of academic experience for students, especially for students studying externally.

It should be noted that students overall did not express any dissatisfaction with the reliability or functionality of CSU Interact, although some suggested that information could be difficult to find. The University recently has decided on an upgrade plan for CSU Interact, which should further enhance functionality for students and staff. In this regard, the Audit Panel suggests that CSU develop a more comprehensive Online Learning Environment Plan than the existing summary document.

3.5.4 Other Student Support for Fieldwork Education

CSU has recognised that students undertaking fieldwork places often incur considerable expenses. Financial assistance for students participating in fieldwork education placements and professional education is provided by the University's Professional Placement Equity Grants and Residential School Equity Grants. The CSU Foundation recently has provided additional support. As well, the NSW Department of Health and the NSW Department of Education and Training provide some scholarship funding. The University will need to give further consideration to ways of expanding financial assistance to support placements.

Commendation 13

AUQA commends CSU for providing funding to support students on placement, noting that the University is seeking to expand this support.

The University has begun to attend to some other areas of improvement, including the need for students to have improved access to the internet and other communication technologies when on placement.

The Audit Panel suggests that the University aim to enhance the experience of external students at residential schools. Many schools are held during trimester breaks and, as a consequence,

there may be few on-campus activities available to external students when they attend residential schools.

The University is beginning to consider ways for international students at its study centres and partner teaching locations to have greater opportunities to undertake placements or internships. The Audit Panel encourages CSU to pursue this matter, as the University's goals in professional education and practice-based learning are goals for all its students.

4 THEME: INTERNATIONALISATION

The second theme for this audit, Internationalisation, was selected by AUQA in view of the University's arrangements for the teaching of international students, which include a campus in Ontario and significant offshore and onshore educational partnerships, recommendations on this theme in the 2004 AUQA Audit Report, and the importance of internationalisation to CSU's strategic planning. Transnational education constitutes a known high-risk area for a university's operations and there are risks in education provided primarily to international students through onshore partner providers.

The scope of this theme includes

- the teaching and learning experience of international students (undergraduate, postgraduate and higher degree by research) in Australia
- teaching and learning experience of international students offshore, including quality assurance and equivalence
- international student support systems
- partner arrangements for offshore teaching
- staff and student mobility and exchanges
- internationalisation of the curriculum
- staff professional development for internationalised education
- international collaboration for research and teaching.

4.1 *Strategy and Responsibilities*

4.1.1 Strategic Directions

The University Strategy 2007–2011 includes aspects of international activity, such as international exchange and research of international standard, but the main statement of the University's goals in respect of internationalisation is contained in the Internationalisation Strategy, which replaces an earlier International Education Strategy.

The Internationalisation Strategy (IS) is regarded as an enabling strategy designed to support four University Plans (Course Plan, Research Plan, Learning and Teaching Plan, and Institutional Development Plan) that sit under the University Strategy. It has six clear objectives and associated targets, as shown on the following page.

The Audit Panel observes that the University's strategy for internationalisation – in all its dimensions – is not yet reflected in understandings of internationalisation by staff across CSU. The University acknowledges that 'further communication and understanding is required to ensure that all staff engage with the IS and embed internationalisation into their standard work practices at CSU' (PF p94).

The Internationalisation Strategy builds on a number of internal reviews undertaken by CSU between 2004 and 2007, and reflects the University's current strategic thinking, which includes the consolidation of offshore teaching partnerships to focus on CSU Ontario and the strongest and most viable partnerships. Several other offshore partnership arrangements are now being concluded and the students taught out. The Internationalisation Strategy also reflects CSU's

intention to expand its Study Centre operations in Sydney and Melbourne to recruit international students to its undergraduate and postgraduate coursework degrees.

CSU Internationalisation Strategy

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
1. Increase enrolments of international students on-shore and off-shore.	The proportion of total load from international students in onshore and offshore programs to be 19% by 2011.
2. Increase the number of CSU students including international study in their programs.	10% of domestic undergraduate students to be undertaking international study, including practicum, in their program by 2011.
3. Strengthen CSU's international research collaborations and profile.	All CSU research centres to have international networks and/or partners by 2011. Increase international research higher degree enrolments to 120 students by 2011.
4. Internationalise the curriculum of CSU courses.	All courses to be internationalised by 2015.
5. Increase the opportunities for staff mobility and international staff engagement.	40% of academic staff (>.5 FTE) to have participated in an international engagement activity by 2011.
6. Enhance the international student experience.	Improvement in international student outcomes as measured in the AUSSE survey.

4.1.2 Responsibilities for Internationalisation

Recommendation 15 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report was that CSU clarify the locus of responsibilities for international activities so that all within the University understand where responsibilities lie. AUQA acknowledges that the university has been working to clarify these responsibilities over several years.

Current responsibilities for internationalisation at CSU are set out in a policy document approved in March 2009, after a period in which a number of structural changes to responsibilities took place. The former International Office and CSU International were disbanded in 2006–2007, and the CSU English Language Centre has been closed. There has also been a recent restructure of the Faculty of Business, which has academic responsibility for many of CSU's teaching partnerships onshore and offshore, including IT as well as business courses.

Overall responsibility for developing and monitoring the Internationalisation Strategy rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The International Operations Committee comprises members from faculties and divisions and was established to identify and raise issues to senior management that may impact on achieving the Internationalisation Strategy.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) however acts as the University's representative for senior level discussions and is responsible for international marketing, direct admissions and international student support. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) chairs the CSU Ontario Management Group and is also responsible for the contractual management, including

negotiation, of onshore and offshore delivery programs, through the Office of International Relations.

The responsibilities of Academic Senate for the Internationalisation Strategy are to maintain, develop and quality assure, where appropriate, academic policy governing aspects of internationalisation including assessment, enrolment, graduation, course accreditation, grade approval, prizes and a range of other academic activities.

Faculties are responsible for implementing the Internationalisation Strategy and are required to report annually on progress to the University Course Planning Committee and the Research Planning Committee. Documents viewed by the Audit Panel show that this reporting is occurring and is being monitored.

Further comment on the ways these responsibilities are being discharged across the University is contained in the sections below.

4.2 Self-Review of Internationalisation

The 2004 AUQA Audit Report contained several affirmations and recommendations to improve the University's ability to assure the quality of its teaching partnerships. A critical self-review of all aspects of internationalisation by CSU in 2008 indicated that these had not been effectively addressed.

For example, in 2004 AUQA affirmed the finding by CSU that increased monitoring and evaluation of the performance of its offshore and onshore partners was required. AUQA also recommended that CSU adopt a risk-oriented approach in the scheduling of its evaluation of current third party providers. The self-review found that 'CSU does not undertake any systematic review of its international activities against the contract or business case, nor does it have in place any formal mechanism for regular whole of program review' (SM 03.02).

The self-review also noted that not all offshore arrangements had formal standard contracts (for example, the arrangement with Hong Kong University SPACE for support of distance education students) and that required administration manuals had not been prepared in all cases. There were no documented exit strategies for international activities, including courses that were being taught out, a matter that had not been addressed by the time of the 2009 Audit Visit.

Academic Senate has a policy to govern the quality assurance of teaching partnerships, entitled CSU Award Courses Offered in Collaboration with a Third Party: Quality Assurance. The self-review found that 'the policy does not seem to be well understood within the University, nor is it applied' (SM3.02). The Audit Panel notes that recommendation 10 from the 2004 AUQA Audit Report asked that Academic Senate develop, as a priority, more effective mechanisms for ensuring the consistent implementation within faculties of University policy for assuring academic quality and standards across all delivery modes and locations.

Among other examples, the self-review found that although 'the legal agreement between CSU and a partner institution clearly states that all activities must be undertaken in accordance with CSU policies and rules', students in offshore partnerships were often subject to the policies and rule of the partner institution. The self-review further noted that 'CSU does not undertake any systematic QA [quality assurance] or review process to monitor the admission process' for locations where student enrolments were undertaken remotely by the partner.

Other important findings were that assessment criteria and standards were inadequately expressed for use at partner institutions (relevant to Recommendation 18 in the 2004 AUQA Audit Report) and that requirements for the approval of promotional and marketing material were not adhered to.

The self-review identified improvements to other aspects of internationalisation at CSU but the quality assurance of teaching partnerships is the one of greatest concerns in regard to academic standards.

The University has acted quickly to make many of the improvements suggested in the self-review, including implementation of a transnational education program reporting and review policy, and the reallocation of quality assurance responsibilities for administrative services delivery at partner operations from faculties to administrative divisions. Administrative manuals are being prepared for all partnerships. Some other improvements that are being implemented by CSU are mentioned in section 4.4, together with recommendations for additional improvements.

AUQA congratulates CSU for undertaking a comprehensive self-review and for making this review available to the Audit Panel. The findings of the self-review caused the Audit Panel to consider closely whether CSU could now be regarded as compliant with that part of National Protocol D4 for universities that requires them to demonstrate, among other things, quality assurance processes which ensure the integrity of the institution's academic programs. Given the improvements made by CSU since 2008 and ongoing action, the Audit Panel decided that CSU should be regarded as compliant but that the governing body should satisfy itself that the self-review recommendations had been fully addressed

Recommendation 11

(urgent) AUQA recommends that CSU ensure that it has thoroughly addressed and implemented the recommendations in its 2008 self-review of internationalisation, particularly those relating to academic quality assurance.

4.3 Offshore Teaching Partnerships and CSU's Offshore Campus

The University categorises its offshore delivery arrangements according to the degree of integration of CSU and teaching partners in course design and delivery, from articulation and own campus agreements through to arrangements where CSU mainly provides some curricula and quality assurance.

A delegation of the Audit Panel visited two offshore teaching partnerships with slightly varying arrangements. Despite the issues raised in the internationalisation self-review and some matters noted below, the Audit Panel observes that CSU has demonstrated an ability to maintain strong partnerships with some impressive overseas partner institutions. CSU has also demonstrated an ability to maintain a successful offshore campus in Canada.

4.3.1 Changchun Taxation College in China

Changchun Taxation College (CTC) is a well-regarded and well-established institution in China that celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2008 and is expected to change its name to include the title university. It is a strong partner for CSU and relevant approvals have been given by the Chinese Government.

CSU has established partnerships with four universities in China, including CTC, to offer its Bachelor of Business Studies degree. All four use a similar model that allows students the opportunity to take out dual awards from CSU and the Chinese university. Students are enrolled as CSU students for the final eight subjects of the CSU Bachelor of Business Studies, having previously studied 16 subjects provided by the partner institution using CSU subject material, which is updated annually. CSU refers to this as a '2+1' model, ie two thirds of the course are taken through the partner institution. Students who pass all 16 subjects receive credit that allows them to enter the final year of the CSU Bachelor of Business Studies.

Academics from CSU travel to China to teach the eight CSU subjects, with tutoring in English provided by selected CTC academics. CSU moderates 10% of assessment items and invigilates and marks all exams. These eight subjects were developed specifically for the CSU courses offered in China, although CSU intends to make them more widely available. As subjects only offered offshore, there is a question of how their comparability with other subjects was assessed by CSU. The previous 16 subjects are taught bilingually, with increasing proportions of teaching in English as students progress through their course. CTC provides additional English language classes throughout these stages. The delegation of the Audit Panel was satisfied with the English language proficiency of students undertaking the final eight subjects.

Most students, and CTC management, would like CSU to offer specialisations in its course rather than only offering the generic Bachelor of Business Studies.

CSU's arrangements with CTC and other partner institutions in China show examples of good practice in partnership arrangements. These features, which are facilitated by an external organisation, include regular meetings among CSU and the four partners, which provide opportunities for benchmarking and discussion of issues. CSU has supported academics from CTC to visit CSU on exchange and the Audit Panel suggests that the University continue and strengthen such exchange visits, which will assist in other collaborative links, including student exchange and the preparation of joint publications.

4.3.2 HELP University College in Malaysia

HELP University College (HUC) has been operating for over 24 years. HUC now has around 11,000 students and, as an institution with university college status, plans to become a university in its own right. Under Malaysian Government requirements, HUC's 'twinning' programs with overseas partners such as CSU must be phased out. It is likely the partnership with CSU will continue with another organisation in the HELP International Corporation Group.

The courses sampled by the delegation of the Audit Panel were the Bachelor of Business (Accounting) and the Bachelor of Business (Marketing), with some attention to the Bachelor of Information Technology. Different quality assurance arrangements apply for the two Bachelor of Business courses (for the final eight subjects), which can be taken as dual awards together with an HUC qualification. Due to professional accreditation requirements for the accounting course, all exams are marked by CSU, while assignments are marked by HUC and moderated by CSU. For the Bachelor of Business (Marketing), assignments and exams are marked by HUC and exams are moderated by CSU after internal moderation by the HUC exam board. CSU staff travel to HUC to undertake undergraduate course moderation.

Both Bachelor of Business courses moved from a '3+0' to a '2+1' model several years ago. The CSU definition of a '2+1' model (which is different to the usual 2+1 model where students take the final year in Australia after two years of study offshore) is that for the first two years,

students are enrolled as HUC students and study subjects approved for credit transfer into the final eight subjects of the CSU course taught at HUC.

The University relied on its partners in Malaysia to arrange approval from the Malaysian Government for the change from the originally approved '3+0' to a CSU '2+1' model and until recently assumed that negotiations, although prolonged, were leading to a satisfactory outcome. As a result, CSU failed to advise the Malaysian Government of the change from a '3+0' to a CSU '2+1' model until very recently. The University has consistently allowed the courses to be promoted and marketed as '3+0', although for the first two years students are not enrolled as CSU students. AUQA considers this to be a serious breach of CSU's responsibilities and likely to have been misleading to students.

CSU has advised that it now intends to again offer the courses as '3+0' courses, but the Malaysian Government has advised that no further intakes are to be admitted, pending finalisation of transition arrangements for the phase out of the twinning programs.

The Audit Panel observes that CSU did not seek re-accreditation of its Bachelor of Information Technology degree from the Malaysian Government at the expiry of the period of accreditation, although students were currently undertaking the program. This matter is being attended to but also points to a lack of care by CSU for its responsibilities to students in offshore programs.

Although HUC is a strong provider, various aspects of the partnership arrangements were of concern to the Audit Panel. Students do not always receive good feedback on their assignments and it is evident that CSU policies are sometimes overridden by local arrangements, as for example in the charging by HUC of a fee to appeal a grade. Staff exchanges with CSU seem to have lapsed.

HUC admits both Malaysian and international students into the CSU 'pathways' subjects, for which the entry standard is set at International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 5.5. Students who do not reach this level can take a five-level English language program at HUC, completion of which is regarded as meeting entry standards. CSU does not have any additional requirements to satisfy itself of students' English language proficiency at entry to the final eight CSU subjects.

CSU does not review how the 'pathway' subjects for its 2+1 programs are actually delivered by partners: over time, the teaching of these subjects may change from the CSU subject outline. In the case of CTC, this risk is mitigated by CSU's providing updated subject outlines to the partner each semester and by exchange visits to CSU by CTC teaching staff. No such mitigation occurs for HUC subjects, and AUQA urges CSU to satisfy itself that the content and teaching of the pathway subjects adequately prepare students for the final eight CSU subjects. The Audit Panel noted quite high failure rates in a number of CSU subjects taught at HUC.

Additional comments on the University's arrangements for academic quality assurance of teaching partnerships are in section 4.5.2.

4.3.3 CSU Ontario

CSU's offshore campus in Ontario, Canada, is the only offshore campus of an Australian university in North America. The campus was established in 2005 and is operated solely by CSU. In 2008, the University established the CSU Ontario School of Education as a school within the Faculty of Education.

CSU currently offers one course at its Ontario Campus, the one-year, graduate-entry Bachelor of Primary Education Studies. The course achieved ministerial approval in Ontario after review by the Post-Secondary Education Quality Advisory Board and separate approval by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). The course has been re-accredited by OCT and is being considered for renewal of ministerial approval. There is an active CSU Ontario Management Group

The course has now been operating for several years and numbers of students are increasing. Retention and completion rates are very high. Students participate in the CEQ. The course is taught by Australian and Canadian academics. CSU notes that it has benefited from the experience of Australian academics who have returned from exchange in Canada with an enhanced appreciation of internationalisation in education. Both Australian and Canadian staff receive an extensive induction that addresses cross-cultural matters.

CSU now has ministerial approval in Ontario to offer the following additional courses:

- Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of International Education (School Leadership).

At the time of the Audit Visit, applications for CSU to offer other courses were under review.

The University has given careful attention to the establishment of this campus. A range of improvements has been identified, including the tracking of students from the application phase through to graduation and the tracking of graduate outcomes. In addition, the NSW Auditor General has recommended that in light of expansion plans, the University strengthen corporate governance, accounting and internal control procedures for its overseas campus. At the time of the Audit Visit, CSU was conducting an internal audit of expenditures.

AUQA encourages the University to ensure that it addresses the risks inherent in rapid expansion when planning the implementation of the new courses at the Ontario Campus. CSU needs to be able to readily identify and track all expenditures for CSU Ontario and for other partnerships, so the true level of surplus is known.

4.4 CSU Study Centres in Australia

Onshore international students of CSU are enrolled in Australia on CSU campuses at CSU Study Centres in Sydney and Melbourne and with Holmesglen TAFE in Victoria, as well as on CSU campuses. The University plans to increase the number of international students at its Study Centres quite significantly over the next few years.

The Study Centres are operated by Study Group Australia (SGA), a part of Study Group. SGA provides English language programs, VET courses and some pathways to study at other universities, but CSU is the sole partner for delivery of higher education courses. A delegation of the Audit Panel visited the CSU Study Centre in Sydney, which is centrally located and has adequate facilities.

The delegation of the Audit Panel heard there is good communication at management level between CSU and staff at its Study Centres but that communication, including visits by CSU academics, could be stronger among course coordinators and academics. However, some SGA staff visit CSU campuses for Board of Examiners' meetings. There are current course and administration manuals for CSU courses offered at its Study Centres.

Study Group has an international presence, which assists in ensuring that CSU is able to attract international students from a wide mix of countries to the CSU Study Centres. Contract teaching staff are recruited by Study Group to teach most of the CSU subjects, although there are some full-time academics.

Students at the Sydney Study Centre appeared mostly satisfied with their learning, although they would like opportunities through CSU for work placements and internships. There is a study skills support adviser who provides assistance in preparing assignments and runs frequent workshops to help students tackle assignments and exams. However, there is no effective support for spoken English and CSU needs to review the adequacy of this support.

The retention and performance of CSU students at Study Centres is able to be compared to those of students at other locations. The Audit Panel notes that retention rates for the sampled courses were much lower at Study Centres than for other CSU locations and also noted quite high failure rates for some subjects at the Sydney Study Centre, matters which CSU must keep under review.

The view from SGA managers and staff at the CSU Sydney Study Centre is that SGA is no longer merely a partner of CSU, but is a 'mainstream' part of CSU. After SGA teachers have successfully taught a subject a couple of times, they can achieve 'special' status, which means their marks are accepted by CSU without moderation. Teachers can also be approved by CSU as adjunct staff, in accordance with CSU policy. The Audit Panel delegation heard that SGA wishes to increase its numbers of full-time teaching staff and would like SGA academic staff to be able to serve on University committees.

Although the growing trust between CSU and its Study Centre partners is likely to be beneficial for academic relationships, nonetheless CSU is in a commercial contractual relationship with SGA. The University needs to be vigilant in ensuring that it minimises the risks to maintenance of CSU's academic standards through partnership operations. Internally, the University also needs to ensure that academic committees formally approve any differences in entry requirements at different locations, for example, the waiving of work experience requirements in MBA courses at some teaching locations.

As for HELP University College, the Audit Panel expresses concern over the extent to which CSU allows its Study Centres to approve entry requirements and credit arrangements without any subsequent checking. This means that CSU cannot be certain that its entry requirements are being adhered to in all cases, a matter that was referred to in the 2004 AUQA Audit Report. CSU has advised that it will shortly undertake an audit of admissions and credit approval at its Sydney Study Centre.

Affirmation 5

AUQA affirms the planned auditing by CSU of admissions and the granting of credit at its Study Centre in Sydney, and encourages CSU to conduct such audits regularly for all teaching partnerships.

It may be helpful for CSU to base some academic staff at its Study Centre operations to assist in making decisions on entry requirements and credit, as the size of these operations increases. This practice is not uncommon in similar arrangements for other universities and may foster good communication as desired by CSU leadership and the University's partners.

4.5 Administrative and Academic Aspects of Quality Assurance for Teaching Partnerships

4.5.1 Administrative Aspects of Quality Assurance for Teaching Partnerships

The Audit Panel finds that, through the Office of International Relations (OIR), CSU is developing a good understanding of, and commitment to, appropriate quality assurance for teaching partnerships. This includes the processes now in place for considering and evaluating new partnerships and the processes for OIR to manage partnerships, seeking approval from Academic Senate for specified variations.

CSU needs to give further attention to ensuring it monitors – and if necessary improves – student support for CSU students at partner locations, including library and academic support. CSU has begun to address this issue by providing partners with outline checklists to self-assess. In the view of the Audit Panel, this approach is unlikely to be adequate. The Panel urges the University to support relevant non-academic staff to evaluate the actual levels of provision at partner providers and their effectiveness, which would also serve to foster professional relationships.

Greater attention to promotional material and the performance of agents are other areas where CSU has responded promptly to the findings of the internationalisation self-review. The University is conducting a comprehensive review of all marketing and promotion material, including auditing of websites, and has revised its procedures. CSU has also introduced regular surveys of new international students on their satisfaction with the performance of education agents, which the Audit Panel considers to be good practice.

Commendation 14

AUQA commends CSU for the actions it is implementing to seek feedback from students on the performance of education agents and suggests these arrangements be extended to its Study Centres.

4.5.2 Academic Aspects of Quality Assurance for Teaching Partnerships

Several issues concerning academic quality assurance for teaching partnerships have been identified above. The Audit Panel advises CSU to be mindful of the additional reputational risks that come with teaching partnerships. CSU staff need to be clear that, while the University desires to foster mutual trust and respect between academics and others involved, the partners are not actually part of CSU and a partner's academic staff are not actually employed by or contracted to CSU. Therefore there are additional risks in these arrangements that need to be managed effectively for the University's own protection.

Responsibilities for academic quality assurance in teaching partnerships are shared among several parties but as the courses taught through major partnerships are those of the Faculty of Business, this Faculty carries much of the responsibility. A recent Faculty of Business restructure consolidated the delivery and management of most business and IT courses offshore in the International School of Business and Partnerships (ISBP), although responsibility for some courses rests with other schools, such as the School of Accounting.

Although the restructure may have assisted in better coordination between academic requirements and course administration, the Audit Panel considers the current structural arrangements do not facilitate sound academic quality assurance for offshore programs.

The current division of responsibilities between ISBP and other parts of the Faculty of Business is complex and not well-documented. The Audit Panel notes that the academic membership of the School is very small, which means that in some cases the same academic will teach a course, moderate assessment, meet as a member of the Board of Examiners, and conduct reviews of the course. Within ISBP, there appears to be little understanding of academic or administrative quality assurance processes. In these circumstances, the Panel considers that ISBP may find it difficult to work productively with OIR to identify risks or gaps in current practices.

Consistent with sector-wide good practice, CSU now needs to move to an evidence-based system of checks and balances to ensure appropriate objective quality assurance for its teaching partnerships. This is likely to involve a different structure of responsibilities within the Faculty of Business, as well as some changes in processes.

Recommendation 12

AUQA recommends that CSU review the responsibilities within the Faculty of Business for academic quality assurance of offshore teaching partnerships to ensure the use of objective and evidence-based processes.

The University has instituted a process to conduct regular quality assurance reviews of teaching partnerships. These reviews are internal and, in the case of academic elements, there is often no separation between the reviewers and those who are responsible for academic management of the courses. AUQA considers that, to ensure a credible and thorough process, such reviews should be conducted by academics external to the Faculty of Business with experience in the academic quality assurance of teaching partnerships. These academics may come from within CSU, eg senior members of Academic Senate or other faculties, or be external to CSU.

Recommendation 13

AUQA recommends that CSU use an independent review process, involving academics outside the Faculty of Business or external to the University, to review the effectiveness of academic quality assurance for the Faculty's offshore and onshore teaching partnerships.

The Audit Panel observes that Academic Senate has previously considered policy for *cotutelle* arrangements but that CSU has no policy on dual awards, ie the circumstances under which a student may receive two awards for common elements of study undertaken through CSU and another institution. Given that the arrangements for many of CSU's offshore teaching partnerships are structured around dual awards, Academic Senate needs to give explicit consideration to the circumstances under which the University will support dual awards. The Audit Panel notes that CSU agreements with partners should identify any dual award structures that will be encompassed in the partnership arrangements.

Recommendation 14

AUQA recommends that CSU develop a policy on dual awards and that pathways for students to obtain dual awards should be noted in agreements with teaching partners and approved by Academic Senate.

4.6 International Students on CSU Campuses and Externally

In 2008, CSU had 795 international students (EFTSL) across nine locations, of which approximately 178 students (EFTSL) were based at regional campuses. Around 351 CSU international students (EFTSL) were studying through distance education.

4.6.1 International Student Experience at CSU Campuses

Participation in AUSSE has revealed to the University a comparatively low level of overall satisfaction among its international students, when compared to other CSU groups and sector averages, despite international students reporting higher engagement across many individual elements of AUSSE (data item 5.11).

As a result, CSU has revised its Internationalisation Strategy to include an objective to enhance the international student experience and is considering specific activities under the Student Experience program. The University states that it is establishing International Clubs on each campus and introducing a Global Buddy program to pair established students with new international students.

CSU has recognised the importance of undertaking more systematic cultural awareness activities for staff. Previous cultural awareness programs had lapsed and 'there is not yet any specialised professional development for staff on aspects of internationalisation relating to teaching and service delivery in a cross-national context' (PF p94). The Audit Panel suggests that CSU ensure this professional development is available to staff at CSU Study Centres.

The University requires students to have an IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent for entry into most undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs (higher IELTS requirements apply for some courses). The internationalisation self-review noted a need for CSU to undertake a thorough review of admission regulations in respect of English language proficiency. Arising from the self-review, CSU has provided additional funding for English language support staff at its main campuses. CSU has not yet considered ways in which it might best embed language and academic literacy support into its courses, but this should be considered within the CSU Degree Initiative.

4.6.2 International Research Students on Campus

In 2008, CSU had 105 international students undertaking research higher degrees, 55% of whom were studying through distance education. The University has around 500 research higher degree students. CSU is planning for a modest increase in the number of international research students by 2011. Many international research students on campus are supported through scholarships, including Australian Development Scholarships, the Chile Bicentennial Scholarships and Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research programs. In addition, CSU's International Tuition Payment program provides tuition fee waivers for up to ten international research students each year.

Most students on scholarships expressed satisfaction with the support provided by CSU, although the Audit Panel notes there are some inconsistencies in the allocation of space and resources, and some students express concern over a lack of technical support for science-based studies or a lack of valuing of research over teaching requirements. Collegial networks and good supervisor support were reported by specific groups of research students, yet others do not have these networks or know how to access them, and for some students there is a clear risk of physical and academic isolation.

Many international research students indicated that they find library resources to be inadequate or not able to be provided in a timely fashion. In a number of instances, students use 'work arounds' to ensure they have access to the material they need.

Research students are concentrated in particular areas at CSU, including University research centres and students working with supervisors in new discipline areas, but not all fields have an established group of research students. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that some research students may feel isolated or feel that resources are made available to them in an ad hoc manner. AUQA encourages CSU to undertake further planning to better meet the needs of its research students, given the specific circumstances in which these students are undertaking their research programs.

Recommendation 15

AUQA recommends CSU undertake further planning to ensure it is able to provide support and a sense of intellectual community for all international and domestic higher degree by research students.

4.6.3 International Distance Education Students

The University has a number of international distance education students. In some instances, CSU is able to offer 'supported' distance education, where CSU study materials are supplemented by face-to-face tutoring in the local offshore environment.

A delegation of the Audit Panel visited one such arrangement in Hong Kong, where CSU has a longstanding partnership with Hong Kong University (HKU) SPACE for the latter to provide supported distance education for CSU's library and information management courses. (CSU also runs IT courses taught by CSU staff through a collaborative partnership with HKU SPACE.)

As with some of the University's teaching partnerships, CSU has benefited from its association with a strong partner. In this case, the Audit Panel notes the particularly robust quality assurance arrangements operated by HKU SPACE, including annual reviews of operations and review of students' academic performance.

CSU is urged to improve its own quality assurance arrangements to better match those of its partner. The Audit Panel suggests that these quality assurance arrangements be reflected in a schedule to the agreement with HKU SPACE now being formalised and, as for other agreements (sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2), that dual awards be noted in the agreement.

Some possible improvements to quality assurance identified by the Audit Panel are:

- induction of tutors
- feedback on assignments to tutors, to help tutors prepare students for the next assignment
- some localisation of material or assignments and partner input to design of subject materials.

The Audit Panel finds that the supported distance education model used by CSU at HKU SPACE is sound and is one that can be expanded in other courses and for other partnerships, with appropriate quality assurance arrangements.

The University has recognised this arrangement as a suitable model for other international collaborative arrangements. For example, it has recently entered into an agreement with

Deggendorf University of Applied Sciences in Germany to offer two professional doctorates through supported distance education.

CSU has identified several improvements to its support for, and management of, international distance education students, including separate tracking of international and Australian cohorts studying by distance education. Academic Senate has identified some other challenges, for example in regard to timelines and jurisdiction for appeals processes.

4.7 *Internationalisation of the Curriculum*

One aspect of the Internationalisation Strategy that remains at an early stage is the internationalisation of the curriculum. An earlier target for the Academic Programs Committee to complete a review of the internationalisation of the curriculum by early 2008 was not met, and internationalisation of the curriculum is now incorporated into the CSU Degree Initiative.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is accountable for internationalisation of the curriculum, as sponsor of the Degree Initiative, while sub-deans for learning and teaching in the faculties have responsibilities for implementing the University's plans for internationalisation of the curriculum.

The self-review of internationalisation noted that the Faculties of Business and Education are currently surveying all their subjects to assess their degree of internationalisation, especially in subjects that have an off-shore enrolment. The Degree Initiative is expected to extend this mapping, in a consistent fashion, across all four faculties.

The Audit Panel encourages the systematic approach to internationalisation of the curriculum chosen by CSU. It may be helpful for the University to identify some priorities among its courses for curriculum internationalisation. In the context of the CSU Degree Initiative, the University is encouraged to consider benchmarking activities, to gauge its relative progress towards internationalisation of the curriculum.

4.8 *Student Mobility*

Under the Internationalisation Strategy, CSU has set an ambitious target that 10% of domestic undergraduate students will be undertaking international study, including fieldwork education, in their course by 2011. The University advises it is on track to meet this target, and has provided funding from its own resources in addition to Australian Government funding and other sources.

In 2009, the University launched CSU Global to provide a comprehensive representation to students of the wide range of mobility options and funding available to them. These opportunities include: student exchange programs for study at CSU partner institutions; faculty-led short-term programs involving a variety of overseas study tours and programs; external provider short-term programs; overseas practicum or internships; volunteering; and 'gap' programs.

CSU's approach to international student mobility recognises that many of the University's students are not in a position to spend a whole semester abroad. As an alternative, the University relies quite heavily on shorter-term embedded mobility options, building on a model developed in the Faculty of Education. Under this model, students spend time abroad for the whole or part of a subject, travelling in groups with faculty leaders. The Audit Panel considers

the use of such academically-focussed mobility schemes to be a creative and practical system that is likely to produce a range of benefits.

Commendation 15

AUQA commends CSU for its commitment to meeting an ambitious target for student mobility and for the opportunities it provides for students to gain international academic experiences.

The Audit Panel suggests that the University, through Senate committees, keep under active review the nature of international experience programs that constitute a whole subject within a course, to ensure that appropriate academic standards are maintained in these subjects.

CSU Global is still quite new and the University has identified a range of planned improvements, including:

- increasing participation by CSU's distance education students in student mobility programs
- enhancing reporting and tracking of student mobility, including recording on the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement
- formal evaluation of student experience and outcomes from CSU Global activities
- a pilot study by the Faculty of Education to investigate the value of short-term programs in the preparation of pre-service teachers working in culturally diverse contexts and to improve current Faculty programs.

CSU is participating in the second Australian Universities International Directors' Forum benchmarking survey of student mobility.

4.9 International Research Collaborations and Staff Mobility

The University states in its Performance Portfolio that since 2007 it 'has taken a more outward looking approach to develop its international research profile' (PF p91). While many researchers at CSU have individual international research collaborations, the University has recognised the need for a more strategic approach, and so has targeted the formation of collaborative partnerships by CSU research centres and other substantial research groups with international research collectives that are similar but complementary to CSU. To support this goal, CSU established, in 2007, a Global Alliance Development Scheme that provides awards of up to \$10,000 to develop such links. The University has also funded the appointment of 15 strategic research professors with extensive experience in an international research context.

The University notes that CSU Global short-term programs also provide opportunities for academic leaders of these programs to enhance their participation in international scholarly networks and identify opportunities for joint research.

The Audit Panel endorses the view of the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) that the success of these collaborative arrangements will be measured ultimately by joint international publications and increased international and national research funding for the University. AUQA encourages CSU to monitor its performance on these outcome measures.

5 DATA

Notes

The Charles Sturt University (CSU) cohort as defined in its 2007 Institution Assessment Framework (IAF) Portfolio consists of: Deakin University, James Cook University, Swinburne University, the University of New England, the University of Tasmania and the University of Wollongong. Among these comparators, Deakin University and the University of New England are like CSU in being significant providers of distance education.

The sector is defined in the CSU 2007 IAF Portfolio as consisting of the higher education Table A providers as listed in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* section 16-15.

Item 5.1: Commencing bachelor students progress rates

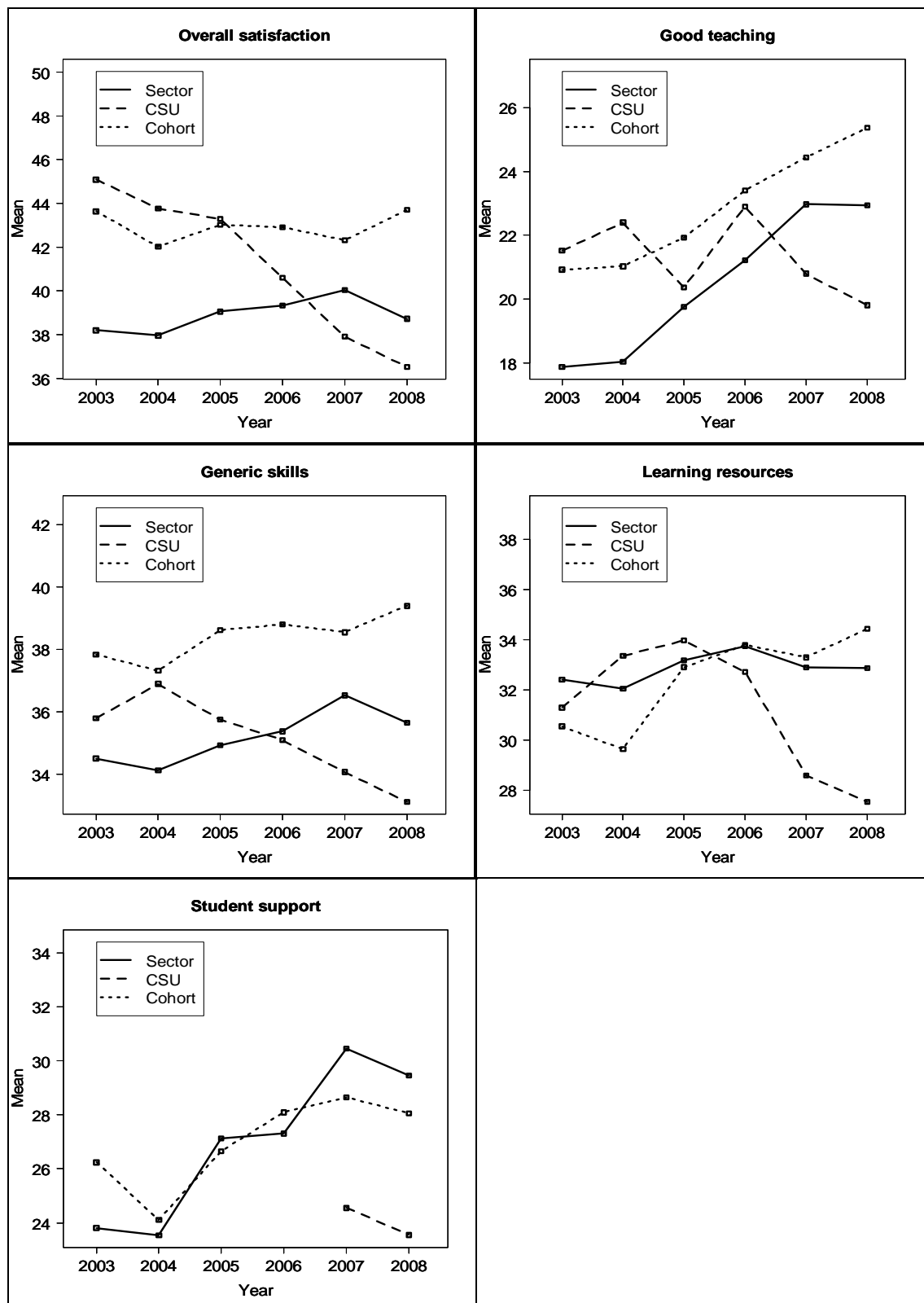
Progress rate	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
CSU Domestic Students	84.43	84.78	84.45	82.59	80.69
CSU Overseas Students	60.00	70.67	76.40	73.84	69.97
CSU Total	77.88	81.66	82.89	81.38	79.28
Cohort/Benchmark Total	83.75	84.24	83.69	83.37	83.37
Sector Total	85.32	85.91	84.85	84.86	84.75

Source: CSU's 2008 IAF Portfolio

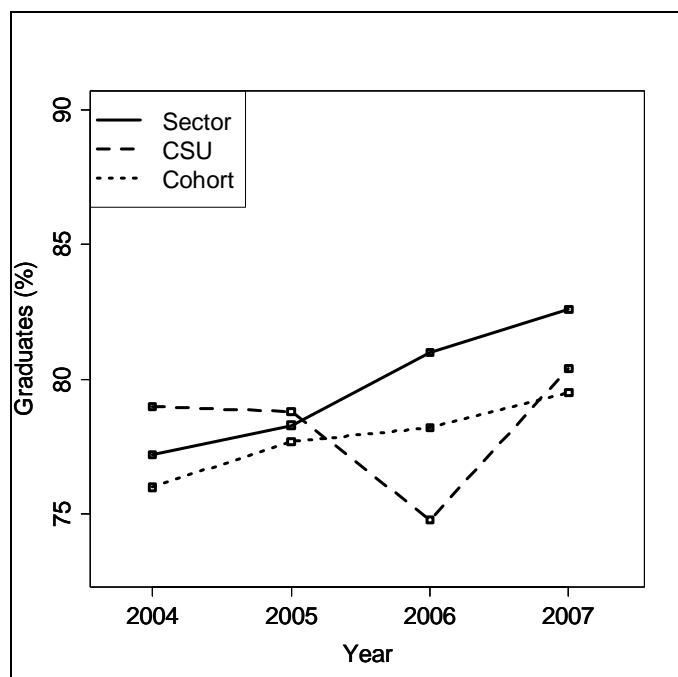
Item 5.2: Commencing bachelor student attrition rates

Progress rate	2003	2004	2005	2006
CSU Domestic Students	21.69	22.50	22.52	23.97
CSU Overseas Students	16.24	16.96	15.66	17.86
CSU Total	20.15	21.20	21.04	22.96
Cohort/Benchmark Total	19.47	18.92	18.46	18.36
Sector Total	17.67	17.38	17.33	16.93

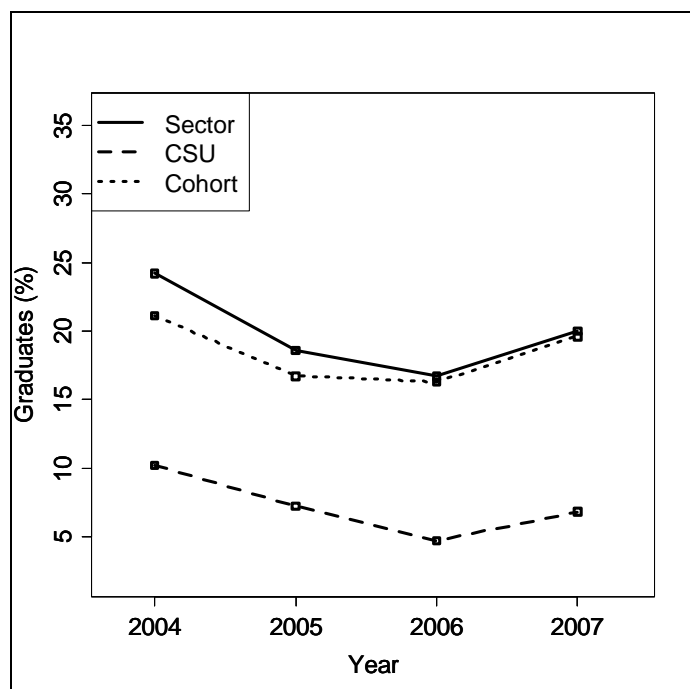
Source: CSU's 2008 IAF Portfolio

Item 5.3: CSU CEQ scale mean bachelor responses compared with Sector and cohort 2003–2008.

Source: Course Experience Questionnaire, managed by Graduate Careers Australia.

Item 5.4: CSU graduates in full-time work, compared with sector and cohort 2004–2007.

Source: Graduate Destination Survey from the Quality Outcomes section of CSU's 2008 IAF Portfolio

Item 5.5: CSU graduates in full-time study, compared with sector and cohort 2004–2007.

Source: Graduate Destination Survey from the Quality Outcomes section of CSU's 2008 IAF Portfolio

Item 5.6: Summary data for CSU and all institutions, Graduate Pathways Survey 2008

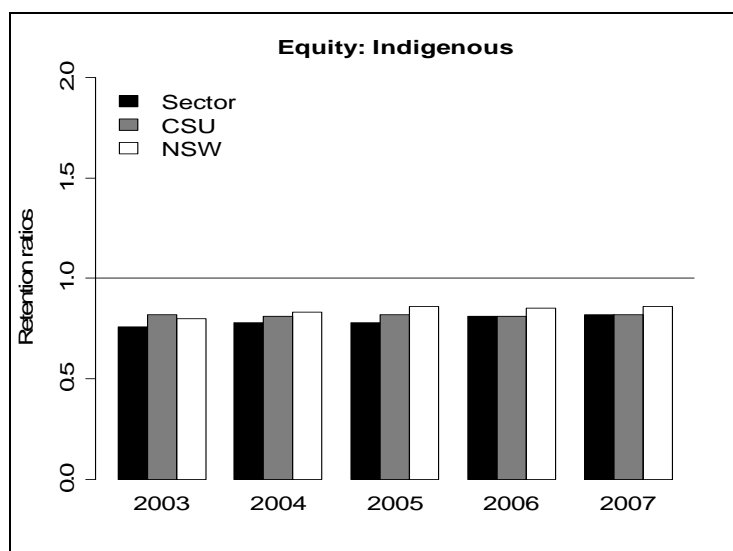
Item (score out of 100)	CSU	All institutions
General learning outcomes	61.4	60.7
General development outcomes	49.0	44.7
Evaluation of careers advice	44.8	39.1
Evaluation of entire uni experience	69.3	66.4
Evaluation of cost, time and effort	82.7	77.6
Attend same institution again	76.4	73.1
Do same degree again	67.1	64.4

Source: Drawn from CSU's Graduate Pathways Survey Institution Report (SM 01.11).

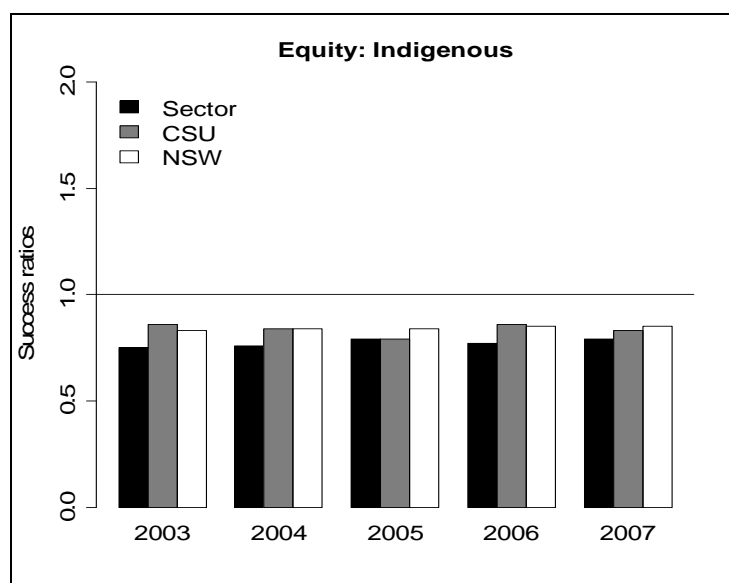
Item 5.7: Equity group percentages of total student numbers of CSU and State 2007

	Non-English	Disability	Indigenous	Regional	Remote	Low SES
Charles Sturt University	1.78	3.77	1.35	44.70	1.85	21.37
State (NSW)	4.99	3.82	1.12	16.67	0.57	14.95

Source: Higher education statistics collections of the DEEWR website.

Item 5.8: CSU Indigenous students retention ratios, compared to the sector and State (NSW) 2003–2007

Source: Quality Outcomes section of the CSU 2008 IAF Portfolio.

Item 5.9: CSU Indigenous students success ratios, compared to the sector and State (NSW) 2003–2007

Source: Quality Outcomes section of the CSU 2008 IAF Portfolio.

Item 5.10: CSU and Australian data from AUSSE 2007–2008

Item	CSU 2007	CSU 2008	Australia 2007	Australia 2008
Practicum, internship, fieldwork education or clinical placement - % done (Item from Enriching Educational Experience Scale)	32	31	19	19
Acquiring job-related or work related knowledge and skills - % Quite a bit/very much (Item from General Learning Outcomes Scale)	71	80	63	67
Work Integrated Learning Scale Score	48	54	40	45
Blended academic learning with workplace experience - % Often + very often	53	48	34	32
Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to employability - % Often + very often	66	67	59	58
Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace - % Often + very often	58	59	44	44
Industry placement or work experience - % done	32	35	25	22

Key: CSU – All participating Students and Australia – Australasian Norms.

Source: Table 2.08 from the CSU PF.

Item 5.11: CSU AUSSE summary outcomes measures by sub-group

Outcomes measures	CSU	Over 20	Equity Student	Part-time or External	Inter-national	First in family
Higher-Order Thinking	61	60	60	61	64	60
Learning Outcomes	63	63	60	62	66	62
Development Outcomes	44	43	44	42	52	43
Average Overall Grade	69	69	68	69	67	69
Departure Intention	35	36	38	32	34	37
Overall Satisfaction	67	64	64	64	51	67

Source: Table 3.08 from the CSU PF.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE AUDIT PROCESS

In 2008, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) appointed an Audit Panel to undertake a quality audit of Charles Sturt University (CSU). Within the scope of the particular audit, AUQA's Cycle 2 audits emphasise institutional standards and performance outcomes, with attention to benchmarking activities and their effect on standards and outcomes.

Quotations taken from the Portfolio are identified in the Report as (PF p).

The mission, objectives, values and vision of AUQA are shown in Appendix B, membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix C, and Appendix D defines abbreviations and technical terms used in this Report.

Full details of the Cycle 2 audit process are available in the AUQA Audit Manual.

AUQA preselected the theme of 'Internationalisation' for the audit of CSU, taking into account: the presence of offshore teaching and onshore teaching partnerships and recommendations from the Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Report.

The theme of 'Professional Education and Practice-Based Learning', one of two proposed by CSU, was selected by AUQA in view of its significance for the University's strategic planning and the University's profile of courses.

On 16 July 2009, Charles Sturt University presented its submission (Performance Portfolio) to AUQA, including 38 supporting materials. The Audit Panel met on 11 August 2009 to consider these documents.

The Audit Panel Chairperson and Audit Director undertook a Preparatory Visit to CSU's Bathurst Campus on 4 September 2009. During that visit, the answers to questions and additional information requested by the Panel were discussed, as well as the Audit Visit program.

A visit to three educational partners of CSU in the delivery of offshore programs was conducted from 15 to 21 September 2009 by the Audit Panel Chairperson and Audit Director. The same delegation of the Audit Panel visited to CSU's Sydney Study Centre on 28 September and the NSW Police College at Goulburn on 30 September. On 29 September, the Panel delegation met with external students who were attending residential schools at the Wagga Wagga Campus and viewed some online systems and CSU subjects. A written report of these activities was circulated to the full Audit Panel prior to the main Audit Visit.

The main Audit Visit to the University's Wagga Wagga Campus took place between 12 and 15 October 2009.

In all, the Audit Panel spoke with approximately 240 people in the course of the main Audit Visit and visits to the NSW Police College and residential schools, including the Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor, senior management, academic and general staff, external stakeholders, undergraduate and postgraduate students (including external and international students). Open sessions were available for

any member of the University community to meet the Audit Panel and three people took advantage of this opportunity.

AUQA expresses its appreciation to Ms Crystal Burke, Mr Col Sharp, Ms Sue Moloney and others for their outstanding organisation and assistance throughout the audit process. AUQA also thanks CSU for its ready production of additional information and for granting the Panel secure access to its intranet for the period of the audit.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 15 October 2009, and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by CSU as well as information gained through interviews, discussion and observation.

While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the University's activities within the scope of the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings.

APPENDIX B: AUQA'S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VISION AND VALUES

Mission

AUQA is the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education with the responsibility of providing public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other institutions of higher education, and assisting in enhancing the academic quality of these institutions.

Objectives

AUQA is established to be the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education, with responsibility for quality audits of higher education institutions and accreditation authorities, reporting on performance and outcomes, assisting in quality enhancement, advising on quality assurance; and liaising internationally with quality agencies in other jurisdictions, for the benefit of Australian higher education.

Specifically, the objectives of AUQA are as follows:

1. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of:
 - the quality of the academic activities, including attainment of standards of performance and outcomes of Australian universities and other higher education institutions;
 - the quality assurance arrangements intended to maintain and elevate that quality;
 - compliance with criteria set out in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes;and monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on the quality of outcomes in Australian universities and higher education institutions.
2. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of the quality assurance processes, procedures, and outcomes of State, Territory and Commonwealth higher education accreditation authorities including their impact on the quality of higher education programs; and monitor, review, analyse and report on the outcomes of those audits.
3. Publicly report periodically on matters relating to quality assurance, including the relative standards and outcomes of the Australian higher education system and its institutions, its processes and its international standing, and the impact of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes on Australian Higher Education, using information available to AUQA from its audits and other activities carried out under these Objectives, and from other sources.
4. Develop partnerships with other quality agencies in relation to matters directly relating to quality assurance and audit, to facilitate efficient cross-border quality assurance processes and the international transfer of knowledge about those processes.

Vision

To consolidate AUQA's position, as the leading reference point for quality assurance in higher education in and for Australia. Specifically:

- AUQA's judgements will be widely recognised as objective, accurate and useful, based on its effective procedures, including auditor training and thorough investigation.
- AUQA's work will be recognised by institutions and accrediting agencies as adding value to their activities, through the emphasis on autonomy, diversity and self-review.
- Through AUQA's work, there will be an improvement in public knowledge of the relative academic standards of Australian higher education and an increase in public confidence in Australian higher education.
- Through AUQA's work with other quality assurance agencies, the international quality assurance requirements for Australian higher education institutions will be coherent and rigorous, avoiding duplication and inconsistency.
- AUQA's advice will be sought on quality assurance in higher education, through mechanisms including consulting, training and publications.
- AUQA will be recognised among its international peers as a leading quality assurance agency, collaborating with other agencies and providing leadership by example.

Values

AUQA will be:

- *Rigorous*: AUQA carries out all its audits as rigorously and thoroughly as possible.
- *Supportive*: AUQA recognises institutional autonomy in setting objectives and implementing processes to achieve them, and acts to facilitate and support this.
- *Flexible*: AUQA operates flexibly, in order to acknowledge and reinforce institutional diversity, and is responsive to institution and agency characteristics and needs.
- *Cooperative*: AUQA recognises that the achievement of quality in any organisation depends on a commitment to quality within the organisation itself, and so operates as unobtrusively as is consistent with effectiveness and rigour.
- *Collaborative*: as a quality assurance agency, AUQA works collaboratively with the accrediting agencies (in addition to its audit role with respect to these agencies).
- *Transparent*: AUQA's audit procedures, and its own quality assurance system, are open to public scrutiny.
- *Economical*: AUQA operates cost-effectively and keeps as low as possible the demands it places on institutions and agencies.
- *Open*: AUQA reports publicly and clearly on its findings in relation to institutions, agencies and the sector.

*AUQA's Mission and Objectives were revised in March 2007, as recommended by MCEETYA.
AUQA's Vision and Values have been modified accordingly.*

APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL

Dr Jeanette Baird, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

Mr Geoff Hines, Executive Chairman, Hines Management Consultants

Professor Mervyn Hyde AM, Academic Director, International Projects Group, School of Science and Education, University of the Sunshine Coast

Dr Stephen Marshall, Acting Director, University Teaching Development Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Professor Jan Thomas, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Murdoch University (Chair)

Observer:

Ms Connie Lok, Principal Registrar and Director of Accreditation and Assessment, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, Hong Kong SAR (offshore visit to Changchun Taxation College, PRC)

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations and definitions are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context.

AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
AUSSE	Australasian Survey of Student Engagement
AVCC	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
CASIMS	Course and Subject Information Management System
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire
CRCs	Cooperative Research Centres
CTC	Changchun Taxation College
CSU	Charles Sturt University
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DLTS	Division of Learning and Teaching Services
EFPI	Education for Practice Institute
EFTSL	equivalent full-time student load
ESOS Act	<i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> (Cwlth)
FEN	Fieldwork Education Network
FLI	Flexible Learning Institute
FTE	full-time equivalent
GDS	Graduate Destination Survey
GPS	Graduate Pathways Survey
HKU	Hong Kong University
HUC	HELP University College
IAF	Institution Assessment Framework, as in IAF Portfolio, a portfolio of institutional information finalised between a university and DEEWR (qv)
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IS	Internationalisation Strategy
ISBP	International School of Business and Partnerships
LTC	Learning and Teaching Committee
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (now disbanded)
MSIS	Mandatory Subject Information System
National Protocols	National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes
NSW	New South Wales
OCT	Ontario College of Teachers
OES	Online Evaluation of Subjects
OIR	Office of International Relations

PEN	Professional Experience Network (now FEN qv)
PF p	Performance Portfolio page reference
Portfolio.....	Performance Portfolio
RIPPLE	Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education
SEQ	Student Experience Questionnaire
SGA	Study Group Australia
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
the University	Charles Sturt University
VET.....	vocational education and training

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